BLOOD ALONE
MASAYUKI TAKANO
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Studio

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My laws, is dat sum Happy World?

BLOOD ALONE

The Characters

Kuroe Kurose

A young man who makes a living as a novelist and works as a P.I. & man-for-hire on the side. Thanks to the special abilities his eyes have gained, he can see past any tricks by anyone with supernatural powers. He is a bit naive to the feelings of women around him, and he currently lives with Misaki as her guardian.

Misaki Minato

Little is known about her past except for the fact that her father was a famous musician. Both she and her father were targeted by vampires, and Misaki has been turned as a result. However, the vampire side of her still lays dormant, so she acts no differently than any other girl her age.

Sayaka Sainome

She is the daughter of a rich doctor, and currently works as the chief of the forensics department with the police. She's known Kuroe since their days as students, and she occasionally calls upon Kuroe for his special abilities. She possibly has feelings for Kuroe, and she also apparently has a special ability.

Higure

Despite his looks and the way he acts, he is one of the most powerful vampires left in the world. He is a friend of Misaki, and as an elder vampire, he is also in a sense her mentor.

Sly

A vampire who is in the business of selling information as well as working as a man for hire. He apparently has a good working relationship with Kuroe and hates vampires for turning him into one.

Maria

A renfield who was previously under the influence of a secret order of vampire assassins, she is now under Higure's protection. She is also Misaki's only female friend of the same age.

The story so far...

Upon seeing his sister taken from him by a vampire, Kuroe's life mission was to find his sister and get revenge on the vampire who shattered his life. With the power he gained through an injury to his eyes, he traveled to Europe where a famous vampire hunter trained him to become one of the humans most feared by vampires.

Currently, he lives in Japan with a young girl named Misaki who had the unfortunate fate of being turned. While he thinks of her more as a daughter or as a younger sister, she sees things very differently.

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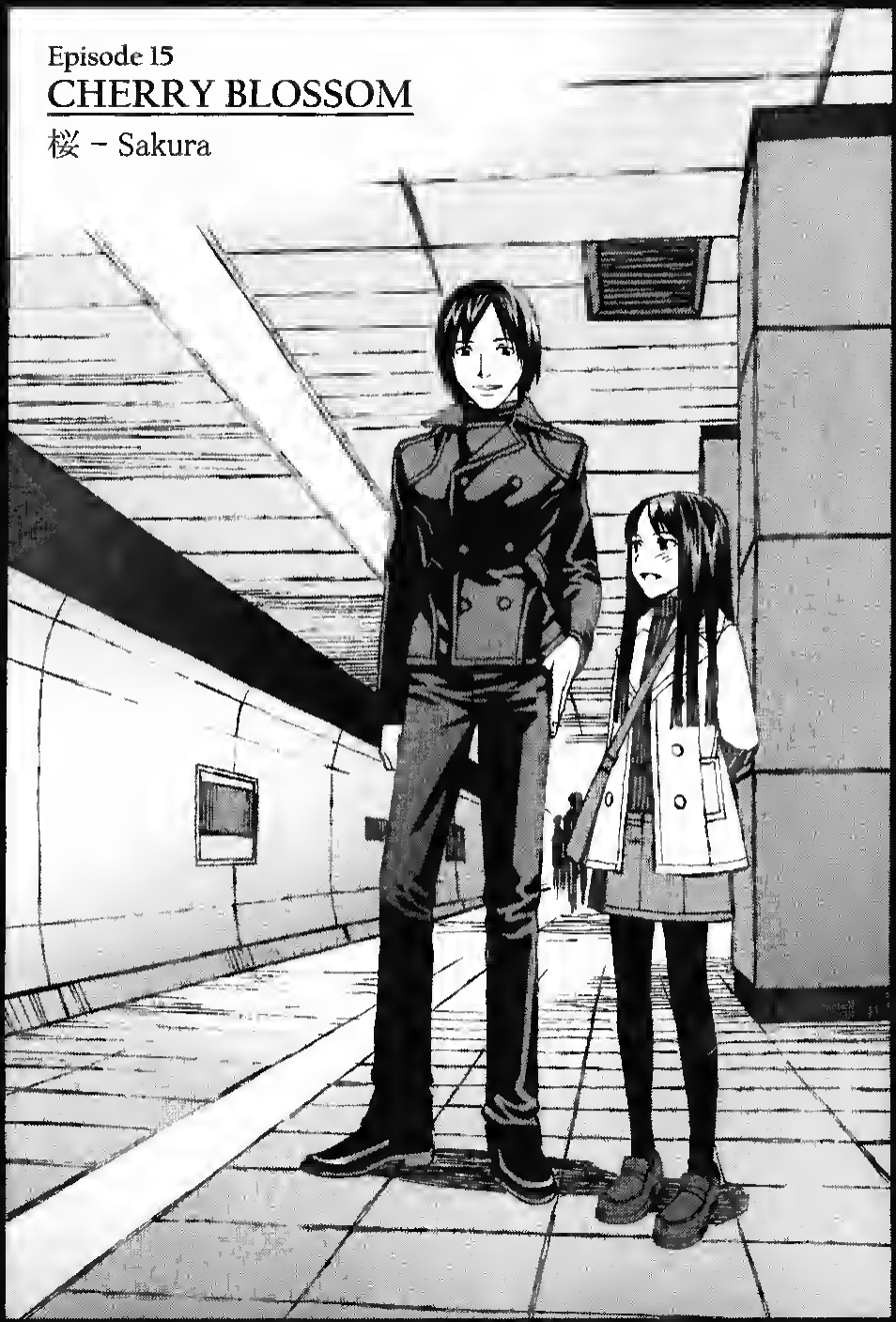
Episode 15

CHERRY BLOSSOM

桜 – Sakura



THIS ACTUALLY ISN'T ALL THAT CROWDED YET. THAT WON'T HAPPEN UNTIL WE REACH THE NEXT STATION...
YOU THINK SO?
IT'S PRETTY CROWDED IN HERE TODAY
RATTLE
RUSH
SHOOMP
!!

THE DOORS WILL BE CLOSING MOMENTARILY.
PLEASE STAY CLEAR OF THE DOORWAY.
THE NEXT STATION IS...
.....
I NEVER IMAGINED IT WOULD GET THIS CROWDED...
AOO
MISAKI
...
.....
MISAKI
.....

WHY DON'T WE GET OFF AT THE NEXT STATION?
EH..? OH, YES.
MISAKI... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
I DIDN'T REALIZE EVEN THIS LINE COULD GET THAT CROWDED.
WHAT A SURPRISE ...
.....
WELL, SINCE YOU HAVE A JOB THAT GIVES YOU THE FREEDOM OF SETTING YOUR OWN HOURS, YOU NEVER REALLY HAVE TO DEAL WITH RUSH HOUR, KUROE.
.....
UUU...

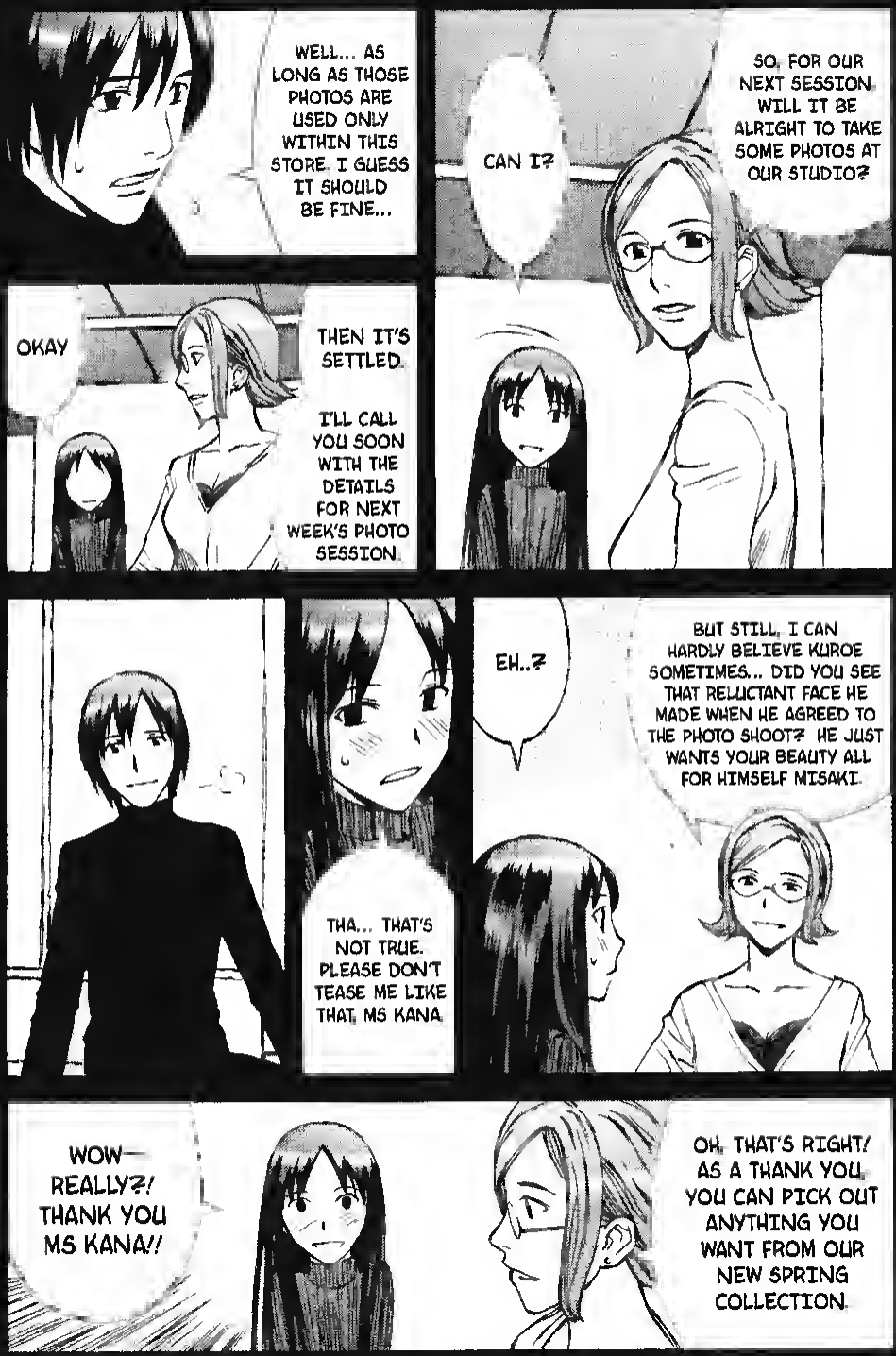
WHAT'S WRONG?
I SEE...
NO. IT'S NOTHING ...
FROM NOW ON, I THINK I'LL PICK HER UP BY CAR...
I CAN'T SAY IT HAPPENS OFTEN... BUT EVERY NOW AND THEN I GET CAUGHT IN RUSH HOUR.
THEN DOES THAT MEAN YOU'VE COMMUTED A LOT DURING THESE HOURS?
WELL...
.....
I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT...
SINCE THE WEATHER'S BEEN GETTING A BIT WARMER LATELY, I WAS THINKING IT WOULDN'T BE SO BAD WALKING A BIT, RIGHT?
BUT ANYWAYS, WHAT WILL WE DO NOW? WE GOT OFF AT THIS RANDOM STATION.
AND WE'RE STILL TWO STOPS AWAY.

GOOD EVENING, MS KANA.
PLEASE, COME IN MISAKI.
CAN YOU WAIT UPSTAIRS?
OKAY

THANK YOU, BUT YOU FLATTER ME TOO MUCH
AND IT'S ESPECIALLY THANKS TO VIP CUSTOMERS LIKE MISAKI WHO ALWAYS FREQUENTS MY STORE
IT'S ALL THANKS TO PEOPLE LIKE YOU WHO HAVE SUPPORTED ME.
I'M GLAD YOUR SHOP SEEMS TO BE DOING WELL.
SO, MISAKI TELLS ME YOU WANTED TO USE HER AS A TEST MODEL?
WELL, FOR TODAY I JUST NEEDED HER TO TRY ON SOME OF THE CLOTHES SO WE CAN TAILOR THEM TO FIT HER PERFECTLY.
YES, THAT'S RIGHT.
YOU CAN DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO CONTINUE ON FROM THERE.
UM... I GUESS IT DEPENDS ON EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT HER TO DO.
THAT IS, IF IT'S ALRIGHT WITH YOU.
I WAS PLANNING ON RELEASING A FORMAL LINE OF CLOTHES LIKE THE ONES WORN AT GRADUATION CEREMONIES
AND I WANTED MISAKI TO BE A MODEL FOR THE OUTFITS

NEXT, WHY DON'T WE HAVE YOU TRY ON THE SUIT?
AND LET'S PUT YOUR HAIR UP.
MY GOODNESS, IT LOOKS SO GOOD ON YOU!!
IT'S PERFECT, MISAKI.
COME ON NOW, KUROE! WHAT DO YOU THINK? DOESN'T SHE LOOK GREAT?!
HONESTLY, EVERYTHING LOOKS SO GREAT ON YOU I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY
MS KANA, YOU DON'T NEED TO PRAISE ME SO MUCH.
UM, YE... YES SHE DOES.
ALL RIGHT THEN, NEXT LET'S HAVE YOU TRY THIS ON...
I GET THE FEELING THIS IS GOING TO TAKE A WHILE...

HM~ I KNEW THESE CLOTHES WOULD LOOK SO MUCH BETTER WITH THE RIGHT MODEL!!
OK, THAT'S PERFECT.
I DIDN'T KNOW THEY WORE THESE TYPES OF CLOTHES TO GRADUATIONS THESE DAYS...
EHE HE
SEE, EVEN KUROE THINKS YOU LOOK CUTE.
UM. SURE... SHE LOOKS VERY CUTE IN THOSE CLOTHES.
ANYWAYS, DON'T WORRY ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT FOR NOW. JUST LET ME KNOW WHAT YOU THINK OF THE OUTFITS... YOU KNOW, LIKE "THAT LOOKS CUTE."
WELL, IT'S BECAUSE PARENTS VIEW THIS AS AN IMPORTANT STEP IN THEIR CHILDREN'S FUTURE, SO EVERYONE ALWAYS GOES ALL OUT.
AND BESIDES, THIS ISN'T EXACTLY SOME NEW TREND OR ANYTHING.


WELL... AS LONG AS THOSE PHOTOS ARE USED ONLY WITHIN THIS STORE. I GUESS IT SHOULD BE FINE...
SO, FOR OUR NEXT SESSION, WILL IT BE ALRIGHT TO TAKE SOME PHOTOS AT OUR STUDIO?
CAN I?
OKAY
THEN IT'S SETTLED.
I'LL CALL YOU SOON WITH THE DETAILS FOR NEXT WEEK'S PHOTO SESSION.
THA... THAT'S NOT TRUE. PLEASE DON'T TEASE ME LIKE THAT, MS KANA.
EH..?
BUT STILL, I CAN HARDLY BELIEVE KUROE SOMETIMES... DID YOU SEE THAT RELUCTANT FACE HE MADE WHEN HE AGREED TO THE PHOTO SHOOT? HE JUST WANTS YOUR BEAUTY ALL FOR HIMSELF MISAKI.
WOW— REALLY?! THANK YOU MS KANA!!
OH, THAT'S RIGHT! AS A THANK YOU, YOU CAN PICK OUT ANYTHING YOU WANT FROM OUR NEW SPRING COLLECTION.

WHAT DO YOU THINK, KUROE?
SLIDE
REALLY?
AND THOSE COLORS SEEM SO SPRING-LIKE, I THINK IT'S NICE.
IT LOOKS GOOD ON YOU.
MS KANA, I'LL TAKE THIS.
OKAY THEN. WHY DON'T WE PICK OUT ANOTHER 2 OR 3 OUTFITS THAT MATCH THAT ONE?
EH—?! CAN I REALLY?!
MS KANA, YOU'RE SO GENEROUS!!
WELL OF COURSE I AM—

GRADUATION CEREMONY, HUH...
IT'S ALREADY THAT SEASON AGAIN...
I GUESS...
NO, IT'S NOTHING...
WHAT'S WRONG..?
HEY, THAT'S RIGHT. HOW ABOUT WE GO AND WATCH THE NIGHTTIME CHERRY BLOSSOMS?
NIGHTTIME CHERRY BLOSSOMS?

LET'S SEE NOW...
I REMEMBER HEARING THE COLLEGE CAMPUS AROUND HERE HAD A GREAT SPOT FOR VIEWING CHERRY BLOSSOMS...
Due to the frequency of students becoming intoxicated from alcoholic beverages during this time of year, entering the campus at night to view cherry blossoms is now prohibited.
...IS WHAT THE SIGN SAYS
WELL, IT'S NOT LIKE WE WERE PLANNING ON GETTING DRUNK SO...
WAIT../ KUROE, WE SHOULDN'T//
.....
EH?
IT'S OKAY HERE, GIVE ME YOUR HAND...

ONLY FOR SUCH A SHORT PERIOD OF TIME DURING THIS TIME OF THE YEAR
IS BECAUSE THEY BLOOM...
THE REASON CHERRY BLOSSOMS ARE SO BEAUTIFUL ...
I DON'T THINK WE WOULD THINK IT TO BE SO BEAUTIFUL ANYMORE WOULD WE..?
AND NO MATTER HOW BEAUTIFUL IT IS... IF IT REMAINED THE SAME FOREVER...
.....

BLUSH
.....!!
WHA... WHAT IS THAT SUPPOSED TO MEAN..?
BUT MISAKI ...
BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T EVEN BEGUN TO BLOOM YET...
WELL, IF YOU PUT IT THAT WAY, YOU DON'T HAVE ANYTHING TO WORRY ABOUT MISAKI.
I'M CERTAIN YOU'LL BLOOM INTO THE MOST...

HEY, YOU THERE~!!
INTO THE MOST..?
NO ONE IS ALLOWED IN HERE AT NIGHT!!
!!
...!!
WE'D BETTER RUN!!
OH CRA..! IT'S A SECURITY GUARD!!
UWA...
HURRY!! THIS WAY~!!

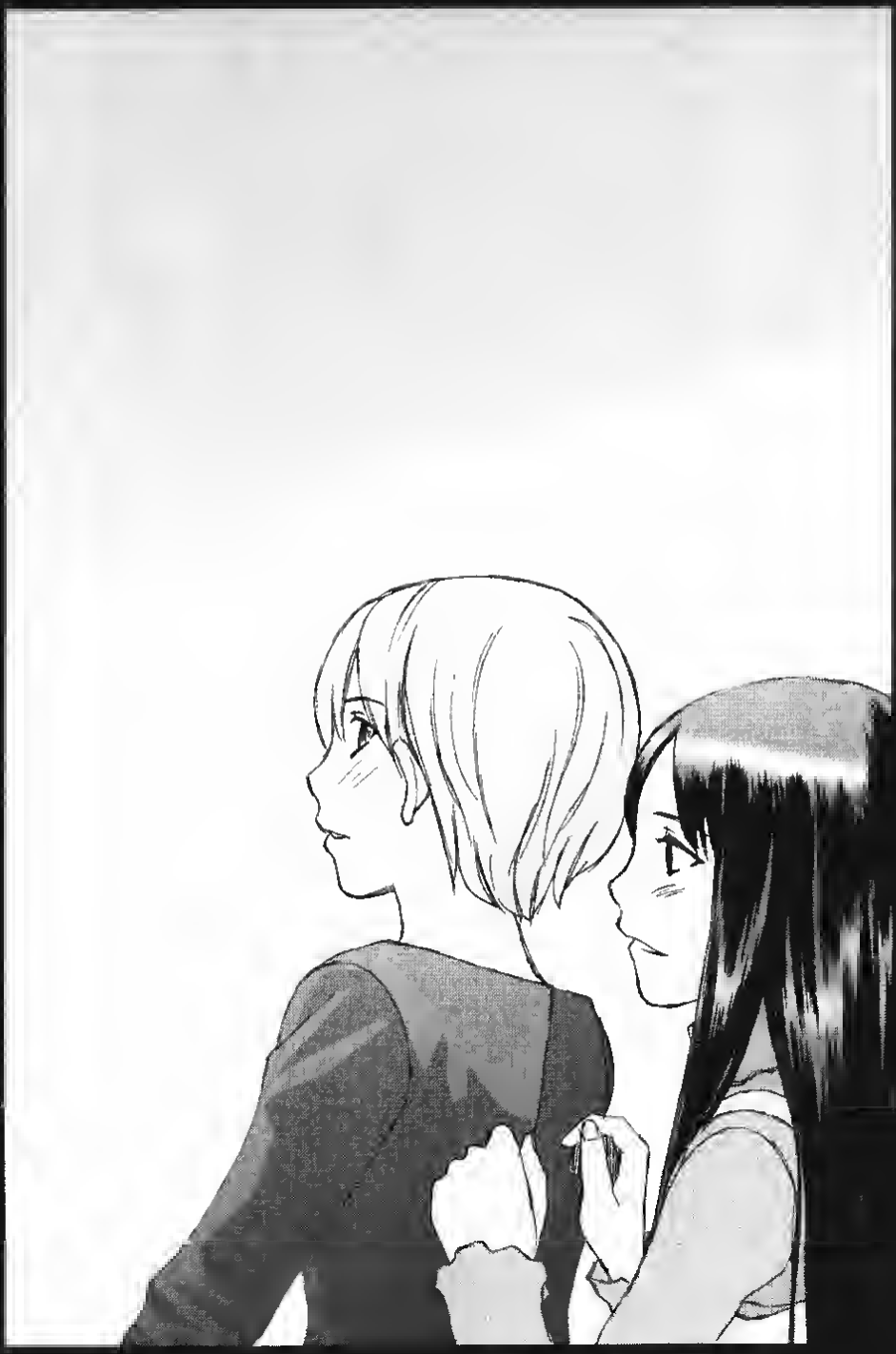
HEY, STOP RIGHT THERE~!!
I THINK... WE SHOULD BE ALRIGHT NOW...
HAAA
HAAA

LEFT BEHIND THE BAG WITH THE CLOTHES I GOT FROM MS KANA...
WHAT'S WRONG?
I... UM...
NOW THAT WAS A SURPRISE
AH...
SO IN THE ENO...
EH...?!
KUROE ENDED UP GETTING SCOLDED BY THE SECURITY GUARD
BUT HE WAS ABLE TO GET BACK THE CLOTHES I LEFT BEHIND.
I'M SO SORRY...
WHAT WERE YOU THINKING? AN ADULT LIKE YOU DOING THINGS LIKE THAT!
SORRY KUROE~

Episode 16

MY FIRST MEMORY

ふたりの思い出 - A Memory Belonging to Just the Two of Them



OH... SORRY...
TURN
KUROE! YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOCKED BEFORE COMING IN!!
SHOINK
MISAKI~
KYAA..!!
HUH..?
CLICK
KNOCK KNOCK
YOU CAN COME IN NOW.
.....

WELL, I WAS THINKING I'D LET MARIA TAKE SOME OF MY CLOTHES IF SHE SAW ANYTHING SHE LIKED.
WHY WERE YOU CHANGING CLOTHES AGAIN?
IT... IT'S BECAUSE I DON'T HAVE VERY MANY PRETTY CLOTHES...
I SEE. THAT MAKES SENSE... MISAKI DOES HAVE THE HABIT OF BUYING A LOT OF CLOTHES AND JUST LETTING THEM HANG IN HER CLOSET.
SHE'S JUST LIKE A SQUIRREL IN THAT SENSE.
AND AFTER EACH SEASON, SHE FORGETS WHERE SHE PUT HER OLD CLOTHES.
HOW RUDE~ I REMEMBER WHERE I PUT ALL MY CLOTHES AND I EVEN WEAR THEM TOO.

SLIDE
HUH..?
THIS ONE?
YES, THAT'S IT.
IN ANY CASE, YOU CAME AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME KUROE. CAN YOU GET THAT BOX AT THE TOP FOR US?
YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE THESE BOXES STACKED SO HIGH LIKE THAT.
AHA HA HA ARE YOU OKAY?
GEEZE MISAKI...
TUMBLE
UWAA!

AH...
THAT'S...
HM..?
LIFT
THIS DRESS...

KUROE...
I WAS JUST THINKING THAT THIS MIGHT LOOK GOOD ON MARIA.
!!
YOU DON'T MIND, RIGHT..?
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ..?
IS THAT REALLY OKAY WITH YOU... MISAKI?
INSTEAD OF LEAVING IT SLEEPING IN THE CLOSET FOREVER, DON'T YOU THINK IT'D BE BETTER IF IT WAS WORN BY SOMEONE?
AFTER ALL, I BOUGHT THIS FOR YOU TO WEAR ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS, BUT YOU NEVER SEEM TO WEAR IT.
.....
THA... THAT'S BECAUSE...

IF YOU LIKE IT, PLEASE TAKE IT...
OF... OF COURSE.
SO, HAVE YOU GOTTEN MORE USED TO BEING WITH HIGURE?
YES, THANK YOU.
I SEE... THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.
HE'S BEEN TAKING VERY GOOD CARE OF ME.

BY THE WAY, MISAKI AND I WERE PLANNING ON GOING TO AN AMUSEMENT PARK TOMORROW. WOULD YOU LIKE TO JOIN US?
WOULD THAT BE OKAY?
YES, OF COURSE. ISN'T THAT RIGHT, MISAKI?
MISAKI?
EH..? OH...
.....
OF... OF COURSE.
THE MORE THE MERRIER.
ALRIGHT THEN, IT'S SETTLED.

ABOUT TOMORROW ...
MISAKI
EH..?
I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO TOMORROW.
WHAT'S WRONG? YOU'RE ACTING STRANGE, KUROE.
SORRY, NEVER MIND... IT'S NOTHING.

IT CAN'T BE HELPED IF HE DOESN'T REMEMBER...
IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME AFTER ALL.
I SHOULDN'T GET SO DEPRESSED OVER IT.
IT'S JUST A DRESS...
SIGH...
BUT THAT COULDN'T BE HELPED. I PUT IT AWAY IN A SAFE PLACE AFTER I HAD IT DRY CLEANED BECAUSE OF HOW IMPORTANT IT WAS TO ME.
I MEAN IT'S TRUE THAT KUROE HASN'T SEEN THAT DRESS SINCE THAT DAY...
WHAT'S IMPORTANT IS THAT I STILL HAVE THE MEMORIES FROM THAT DAY CLOSE TO MY HEART...
FORGET ABOUT THE DRESS.
BUT STILL... IT WOULD HAVE BEEN NICE IF HE REMEMBERED AT LEAST A LITTLE FROM THAT DAY.
.....

JUMP
AAHH —!!
.....
GASP
AFTER I GOT IT BACK FROM THE DRY CLEANERS I PLACED IT INTO THAT BOX ALONG WITH...
WAIT A MINUTE...
IT'S THE ONE SHE MAKES WHEN SHE'S TRYING TO HOLD BACK HER FEELINGS ABOUT SOMETHING
AND THAT FACE SHE MADE...
MISAKI WAS DEFINITELY ACTING A BIT STRANGE...
WAIT... NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT SHE STARTED ACTING STRANGE AFTER WE STARTED TALKING ABOUT WHETHER TO GIVE AWAY THAT ONE DRESS OR NOT...
AND BESIDES, MISAKI HAS BEEN SO HAPPY ABOUT FINALLY MAKING A FEMALE FRIEND HER AGE THAT IT COULDN'T POSSIBLY BE ABOUT MARIA...
WELL, I TOLD MISAKI BEFOREHAND ABOUT INVITING MARIA TO COME WITH US TO THE AMUSEMENT PARK SO THAT CAN'T BE IT.

KLUNK
HRM... I GIVE UP...
.....
AH...
SPLASH
SHOOT...

.....!!
SIGH
AH..!
THAT DRESS, WAS IT THE ONE FROM..?!

MR. KUROE...

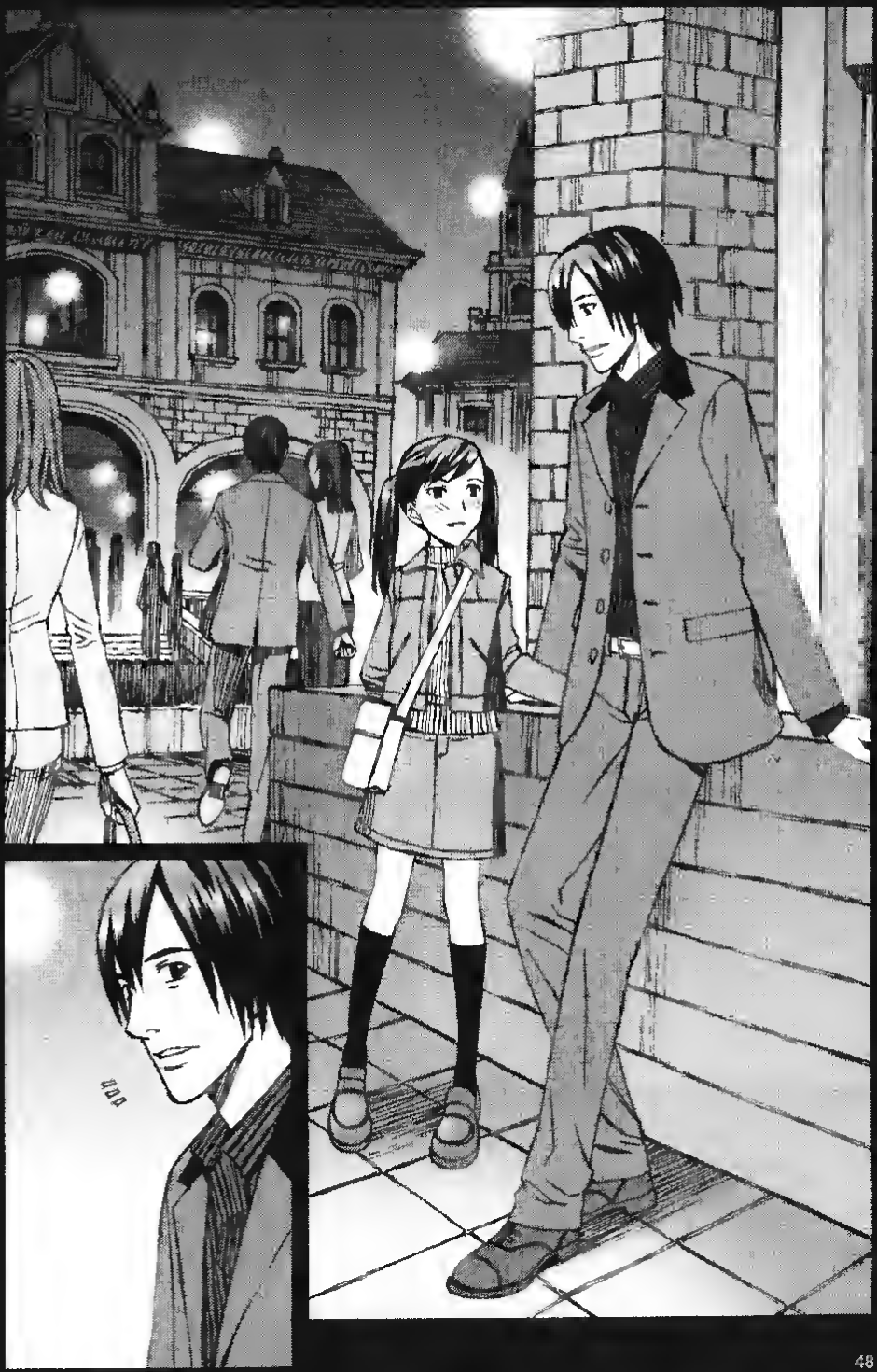
HE SAID IT WOULD LOOK GOOD ON ME...
PEEK
STARE~
SHRIEK !!
BOO!!
STARTLE
.....

I THOUGHT I'D SURPRISE YOU SINCE YOU DIDN'T NOTICE ME AT ALL.
SINCE AROUND THE TIME YOU SAID "MR. KUROE~♥"
HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN STANDING THERE~?!
MASTER HIGURE ..!!
WHA..?!
UM...
IT... IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK, MASTER HIGURE...
.....
YOU'RE NOT MY SLAVE, AND YOU'RE NOT MERELY SOME GUEST.
YOU KNOW, IT'D BE NICE IF YOU WOULD STOP WITH THE WHOLE "MASTER" THING.

SO IT'D BE NICE IF YOU TREATED ME LIKE A CUTE YOUNGER BROTHER OR SOMETHING...
BLUSH
I WANT YOU TO THINK OF ME AS FAMILY...
NO ACTUALLY, THAT'S THE PART WHERE YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO LAUGH.
I... I DON'T THINK I UNDERSTAND ...
UM... I...
.....
I'M NOT SURE IF I COULD ALLOW MYSELF TO DO THAT...
NO ONE HERE IS GOING TO TREAT YOU LIKE AN UNWANTED GUEST OR A PRISONER.
WELL, TO PUT IT SIMPLY... DON'T WORRY ABOUT ANYTHING AND JUST MAKE YOURSELF FEEL AT HOME HERE.
.....
YES SIR.

RANGE RELATIONSHIP
The dress I wore on my first date with Kuroe.

WHA... WHAT SHOULD I DO?!
IF SHE SEES THAT, I...
KNOCK KNOCK
MARIA
YOU GOT A CALL FROM KUROE.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COME ON, MASTER HIGURE~!
I'M STILL SLEEPY ~
HIGURE ..?

EH..?
I THOUGHT ABOUT IT AND I DECIDED TO RETURN IT.
IT LOOKED EXPENSIVE SO I'D FEEL BAD IF I KEPT IT.
AND BY THE WAY, I DIDN'T TRY IT ON SO DON'T WORRY.
UM... DI... DID YOU BY ANY CHANCE SEE A MEMO IN THE BOX..?
A MEMO?
I DON'T KNOW... I DON'T RECALL SEEING ANYTHING LIKE THAT...
RE... REALLY?
IN THAT CASE, FORGET I SAID ANYTHING.

BUT ANYWAYS, WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
W... WELL, A LOT OF THINGS HAPPENED SO IT'S KIND OF COMPLICATED ...
I HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO IDEA WHAT ALL THIS IS ABOUT...
DON'T ASK ME. I ONLY ENDED UP COMING BECAUSE MARIA KEPT SAYING SHE WANTED ME TO COME NO MATTER WHAT.
.....
WELL... IN THE END, YOU STILL STAND OUT MORE THAN I DO HERE AT A PLACE LIKE THIS.

ALRIGHT, I'LL BE WAITING HERE WITH HIGURE.
OK THEN, WE'RE GOING TO GO RIDE THAT LAST ONE ONE MORE TIME—
.....
I REALLY APPRECIATE EVERYTHING YOU'VE DONE FOR MARIA
.....
DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT

SO HOW DID YOU FIGURE ME OUT SO EASILY? DID YOU ASK SLY ABOUT ME?
.....
I JUST GOT THE FEELING... THAT YOU'D HELP OUT IF WE ASKED
BUT I'M ACTUALLY IMPRESSED THAT YOU EVEN THOUGHT OF ASKING ME FOR HELP.
IT WAS SMART OF YOU TO ASK FOR MY HELP.
SINCE SHE'S A RENFIELD, SHE NEEDS THE BLOOD OF HER BLOOD PARENT TO SURVIVE.
WELL... FINE... IT DOESN'T REALLY MATTER.
BUT IF THAT BLOOD PARENT IS KILLED...
YOU NEED A VAMPIRE OF THE SAME BLOOD LINE AS THAT BLOOD PARENT.
OR YOU NEED ANOTHER VAMPIRE TO CANNIBALIZE THE BLOOD PARENT SO THAT THE PARENT'S BLOOD CAN BE ABSORBED INTO THE OTHER VAMPIRE.

.....
BUT IF IT WERE A WEAKER VAMPIRE, THE STRARUDA HE WAS TRYING TO ABSORB COULD HAVE TAKEN CONTROL OF HIM.
FOR AN ELDER VAMPIRE LIKE ME, IT ISN'T MUCH OF A PROBLEM...
EVEN IF HE WAS JUST A THIRD RATE VAMPIRE, ABSORBING THE BLOOD OF ANOTHER VAMPIRE, OR IN OTHER WORDS, DRINKING HIS STRARUDA DOES HAVE ITS RISKS.
BESIDES, MARIA AND HER FATHER WILL HAVE TO STAY AT MY PLACE FOR A WHILE. THIS MATTER IS PRETTY MUCH SETTLED.
SO FOR THE TIME BEING, WE SHOULDN'T HEAR BACK FROM THEM... AT LEAST NOT FOR A WHILE.
AFTER TURNING THE REMAINS OF THAT VAMPIRE INTO ASHES, I HAD MY PEOPLE SPREAD RUMORS THAT HE SUCCESSFULLY KILLED HIS TARGET.
I DON'T KNOW IF THERE'S ANYTHING I COULD DO TO REPAY YOU...
THEY ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH TO DEAL WITH RIGHT NOW TO EVEN BEGIN THINKING ABOUT STARTING A CLAN WAR WITH ANOTHER BLOOD FAMILY.
TO BEGIN WITH, EVEN IF THEY FIND OUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED, IT'S NOT LIKE THEY CAN DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT.

THAT'S NOT TRUE...
THERE IS SOMETHING YOU CAN DO FOR ME.
NEVER MIND...
WHA... WHAT IS IT?
.....
I GUESS FARUMEK REALLY DOESN'T WORK ON HIM...
BUT YOU KNOW, PUTTING ALL THIS ASIDE, I'M STILL ONE OF THE SCARIEST VAMPIRES AROUND.
WELL, LET'S JUST SAY YOU OWE ME ONE.

HUH..? WHERE'S KUROE?
WHO KNOWS? MAYBE HE WENT TO BUY SOMETHING.
NO... I'M FINE JUST LIKE THIS.
MASTER HIGURE, YOU SHOULDN'T JUST SIT THERE LIKE THAT. WHY DON'T WE GO RIDE SOMETHING TOGETHER?
.....
H... HEY, WAIT~!
OH~ DON'T SAY THAT~! COME ON, PLEASE~!

HE MIGHT GET WORRIED IF NO ONE'S HERE WHEN HE GETS BACK.
MISAKI, WHY DON'T YOU WAIT HERE FOR MR. KUROE?
AH... IN THAT CASE, I'LL COME WITH YOU...
UM... OKAY.
HUH?
I SEE.
MARIA AND HIGURE WENT TOGETHER TO GO ON A RIDE.
AH...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE BY YOURSELF, MISAKI?

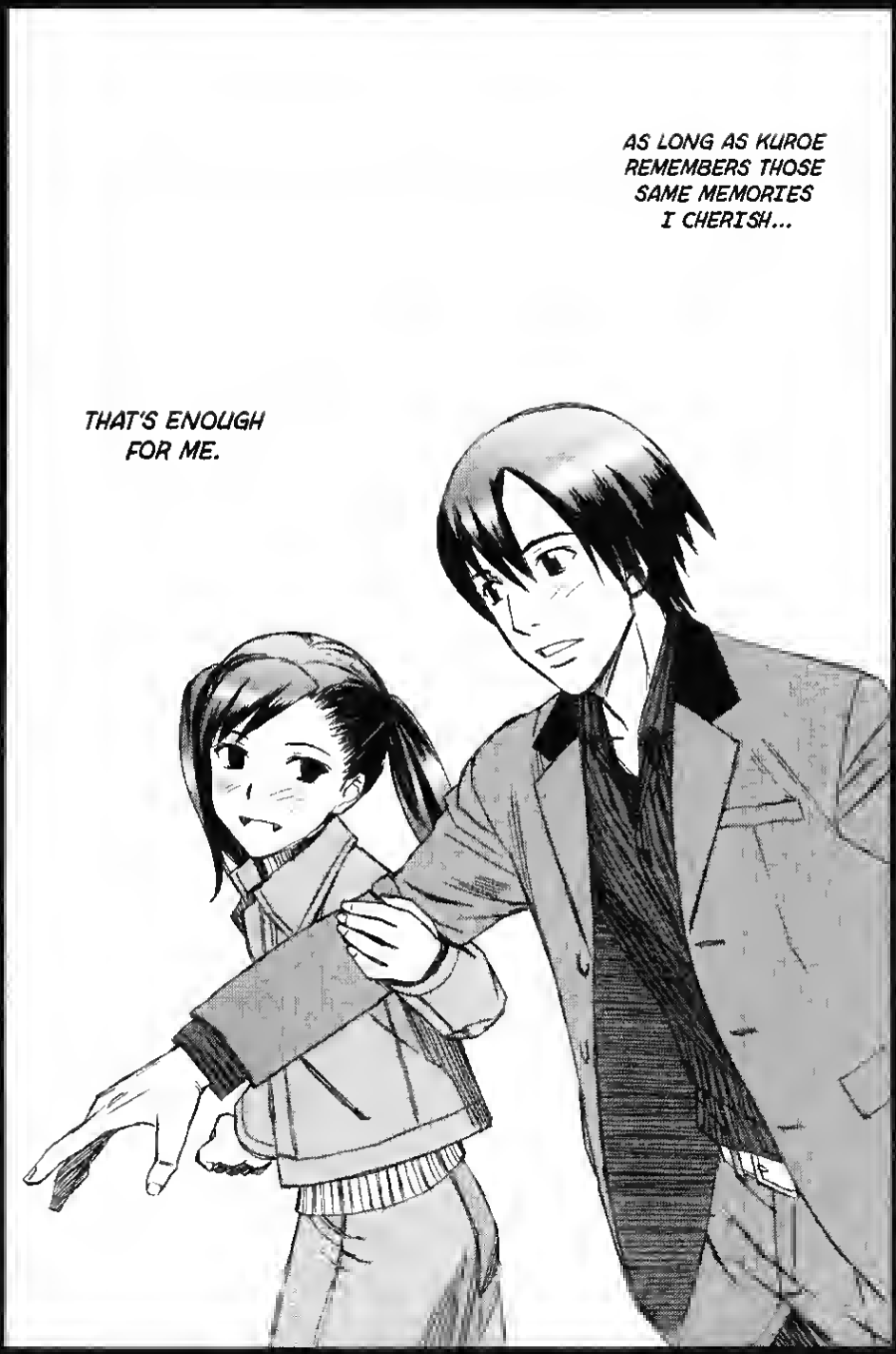
THANK YOU.
I BOUGHT DRINKS FOR EVERYONE, BUT OH WELL...
TRY NOT TO SPILL ANY ON YOUR CLOTHES LIKE LAST TIME.
IF I REMEMBER CORRECTLY, YOU WERE WEARING THAT ONE DRESS THAT DAY RIGHT?
!!

O... OH IS THAT RIGHT? I DON'T RECALL.
YOU REMEMBERED ...
KUROE...
.....!!
YES, THAT'S RIGHT.
THERE'S NO WAY I'D FORGET.
KUROE...

I... I DIDN'T CRY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET~!
!!
YOU WERE CRYING RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STREET AND CAUSED A BIG SCENE.
I HAVE TO SAY, I TOOK A LOT OF HEAT BECAUSE OF IT.
GEEZE~ WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO REMEMBER JUST THE USELESS DETAILS, KUROE~!
WHAT..? I... I DID NOT!!
AT THAT TIME, EVERYONE AROUND US WAS STARING AT ME LIKE I WAS SOME EVIL GUY. I HAVE TO SAY I WAS REALLY EMBARRASSED.
YES. THAT'S RIGHT. YOU WEREN'T MERELY CRYING. YOU WERE SOBBING YOUR EYES OUT.
NO, WAIT... UM, THIS ISN'T WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE..!
CHATTER CHATTER
PANIC
PANIC
WHIMPER
WHIMPER

THA... THAT WASN'T MY INTENTION EXACTLY...
WHY DO I GET THE FEELING YOU'RE TRYING TO HELP FURTHER THEIR RELATIONSHIP?
IS... IS THAT RIGHT, SIR?
FROM EVERYTHING I'VE OBSERVED ABOUT THEM, THEIR RELATIONSHIP ISN'T WHAT YOU THINK IT IS.
WA... MASTER HIGURE...
WELL, IF YOU'RE NOT PLANNING ON GOING AFTER HIM, I THINK I WILL.

I'M SORRY ABOUT THE DRESS...
I SHOULD HAVE REALIZED SOONER.
IT'S OKAY...
IT'S JUST A DRESS AFTER ALL.
YES, THAT'S RIGHT...


AS LONG AS KUROE REMEMBERS THOSE SAME MEMORIES I CHERISH...
THAT'S ENOUGH FOR ME.

Episode 17

MIDNIGHT SWIM

星空のクロール – Swimming Amongst the Stars

YAWN
WOW— THERE'S NO ONE HERE BUT US!!
IT'S ALMOST AS IF THIS POOL WAS SPECIALLY RESERVED JUST FOR US!!
IT'S ONLY BECAUSE NO ONE ELSE WOULD BE SWIMMING AT THIS TIME OF NIGHT.

IT'S SO WONDERFUL~! I NEVER IMAGINED THERE WOULD BE A SWIMMING POOL SO CLOSE BY WE COULD SWIM AT WHENEVER WE WANTED~
Although... this is actually the worst season for swimming...
ALRIGHT THEN~! TIME TO START SWIMMING ~!!
RUSTLE
HEY! WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!
YOU SHOULD ALWAYS USE THE LOCKER ROOM TO GET CHANGED!!
BUT WHY? THERE'S NO ONE ELSE HERE EXCEPT YOU KUROE.
I DON'T MIND BEING WATCHED IF IT'S YOU, KUROE
HU HU HU
Oh, Kuroe~ you're so cute when you're bashful like this~
FINE THEN.

.....!!
WHAT'S WRONG? AREN'T YOU GOING TO GET CHANGED?
EH?!
I...
.....
STEP
STEP
I'LL BE BACK. I'M GOING TO GET CHANGED IN THE WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM.
I WAS JUST KIDDING!! WASN'T IT OBVIOUS?

HE SAID, "IT WAS JUST DUMB LUCK THAT NO CIVILIANS WERE INJURED WHEN YOU OPENED FIRE WITH YOUR SIDEARM"!! BUT IT'S SO OBVIOUS THAT THE SITUATION WOULD HAVE GOTTEN MUCH WORSE IF I HADN'T~!!
AND THEN~
WELL, IT COULDN'T BE HELPED.
THINGS DON'T ALWAYS WORK IN REAL LIFE LIKE THEY DO IN MOVIES OR SOME DRAMA.
BUT YOU KNOW, IN A CASE LIKE THAT, I THINK YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN BETTER OFF IF YOU HAD STAYED IN THAT ONE STANCE WHERE YOU'RE JUST ABOUT TO DRAW YOUR GUN. IT MIGHT HAVE ALSO GIVEN YOU THE SAME RESULTS, RIGHT?
IF YOU ENDED UP WRITING SOMETHING LIKE THAT, IT WOULDN'T BE MUCH OF A LETTER OF APOLOGY.
And there would be a 1oor chance that you would get fired
Damn it...
IF I HAVE TO WRITE A LETTER OF APOLOGY, IT'D BE ABOUT HOW I REGRET NOT TURNING THAT CRIMINAL INTO SWISS CHEESE!
PAT

I HATE TO ADMIT IT, BUT YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT.
WELL, WE CAME FOR A SWIM TO BLOW OFF SOME STEAM
SO WHY DON'T WE FORGET ABOUT ALL THAT AND SWIM~?
.....!!
EH?
IT'S MY PRINCE ...!
!!

REMEMBER WHEN THAT SERIAL KILLER WAS MURDERING THOSE PEOPLE AROUND THE SUBWAY..?
PEEK
PEEK
OH YEAH.
WHO IS THAT?
ARE YOU SURE THAT'S HIM?
I DON'T KNOW... HE SEEMS SO GENTLE. HE DOESN'T LOOK LIKE THE TYPE AT ALL...
YES, I'M ABSOLUTELY CERTAIN THAT'S HIM!!
SO HE'S THE ONE THAT SAVED YOU?
NOTHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN IF YOU JUST SIT HERE HIDING. GO, ALREADY~
SHOVE
KYAA..!
AND SO? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HIDING BACK HERE?
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
AHH~ I NEVER IMAGINED I'D MEET HIM AGAIN AT A PLACE LIKE THIS...

UM... EXCUSE ME...
YES..?
THA... THANK YOU FOR SAVING ME THE OTHER DAY
AND I'M SO SORRY I WASN'T ABLE TO THANK YOU PROPERLY AT THAT TIME...
FIDGET
FIDGET
?
BUT I'M NOT SURE WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT...
UM... I'M SORRY...
HAVE WE MET SOMEWHERE BEFORE?
EH?!
YOU SAVED ME FROM THAT SERIAL KILLER WHEN I WAS DOWN IN THE SUBWAY EARLY ONE MORNING..!
I THINK SHE'S STARTING TO LOSE IT...
PANIC
PANIC
KUROE~

HM?
I'M BACK~
WHO ARE THEY..?
UM...
EH..?!
ACTUALLY... I'M NOT REALLY SURE.
ARE THEY PEOPLE YOU KNOW?
IS SHE HIS DAUGHTER ..?!
WHICH MEANS HE'S ALREADY MARRIED ..?!

UMM... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
STAGGER
HOW COULD THIS BE ...
HOW...
YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE US—!!
I'M SORRY!!
SHOCK
TUG
HE'S PROBABLY JUST SOME OLD GEEZER TRYING TO PASS HIMSELF OFF AS BEING YOUNG. SO FORGET ABOUT HIM.
HONESTLY—! I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU'D BE ATTRACTED TO A GUY WHO ALREADY HAS A WIFE AND KIDS.
SOB
BUT I NEVER THOUGHT SOMEONE THAT LOOKED AS YOUNG AS HE DID COULD HAVE A DAUGHTER THAT AGE—
HEY, COME ON..! GET A HOLD OF YOURSELF!
STEP
STEP

DAUGHTER..?
.....
OLD GEEZER..?
WHERE DO YOU PLAN ON GOING?
WAIT
STOP
SWIPE
.....
PLEASE. DON'T. I GET THE FEELING THINGS MIGHT GET MORE COMPLICATED IF YOU DO.
I PLAN ON GOING OVER TO THEM AND TELLING THEM WE AREN'T FATHER AND DAUGHTER.

WHY AREN'T YOU GETTING CHANGED, KUROE?
I'M FINE BECAUSE I'M NOT GOING TO SWIM.
BY THE WAY...
IT WOULD BE MORE FUN IF WE SWAM TOGETHER.
HOW BORING.
SHHHH
SHHHH
WHAT ARE YOU DOING..?
ISN'T IT OBVIOUS?

AH..!
HERE, GIVE IT TO ME.
SNATCH
.....
SHHH
SHHH
FLAP
HM?
NO, IT'S NOTHING.
AN INDIRECT KISS..!!
AH...

BUT STILL, I'M SURPRISED YOU STILL USE THESE THINGS. DOES THIS MEAN YOU STILL CAN'T SWIM WITHOUT IT..?
UUU...
THERE... THAT SHOULD BE GOOD ENOUGH.
SQUEEZE
OH, IS THAT RIGHT..?
I CAN SWIM FIVE, NO, TEN METERS WITHOUT IT.
NO... OF COURSE I CAN.
AH... THANK YOU.
HERE. IT'S READY.

SPLASH
THERE YOU GO~
SPIN
?!
YOU'RE SO MEAN!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU!!
TURN
OH~? IT FLEW A LOT BETTER THAN I THOUGHT IT WOULD.
.....

GASP
I WOULDN'T WASTE ANY TIME IF I WERE YOU. SEE, IT'S FLOATING FURTHER AND FURTHER INTO THE DEEP END WHILE WE SPEAK.
YOU DORK!!
I'LL GET YOU BACK FOR THIS LATER!!

MISAKI
YOU'VE SWUM ENOUGH FOR TODAY, HAVEN'T YOU?
YES...
I THINK WE SHOULD START HEADING BACK SOON.
EH—? ALREADY?

BY THE WAY...
I THINK YOU'VE GAINED A BIT OF WEIGHT LATELY, KUROE...
STAB
KNEE
BESIDES, YOU HAVEN'T BEEN GETTING ENOUGH EXERCISE LATELY KUROE.
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN A LOT MORE FUN IF YOU HAD SWAM WITH ME.
Victory
SPLASH
HMM... SHE HAS A POINT. I HAVEN'T BEEN GETTING MUCH EXERCISE LATELY...
CREEP
UWA?!
SHOVE
TAKE THAT!!

YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT...
BUT I THINK I SHOULD PROBABLY CHANGE OUT OF THESE CLOTHES FIRST.
IT'S GOTTEN A LOT MORE FUN ALREADY, DON'T YOU THINK?
SEE?
.....
drenched
TUG
KYAAAAA?!
SPLASH
YES, I GUESS SO.
REACH
YAY—♪
EH?
CHOP

SPLASH
SHRIEK ..!
UWAAAA
SPLASH
COUGH COUGH
SPLASH
GLARE
WHA ..?!
HAAA
HAAA
GRAB
AHA HA~ YOU'RE RIGHT, WE'RE HAVING FUN ALREADY~
YOU DORK!!
BONK
BONK

HMP..!

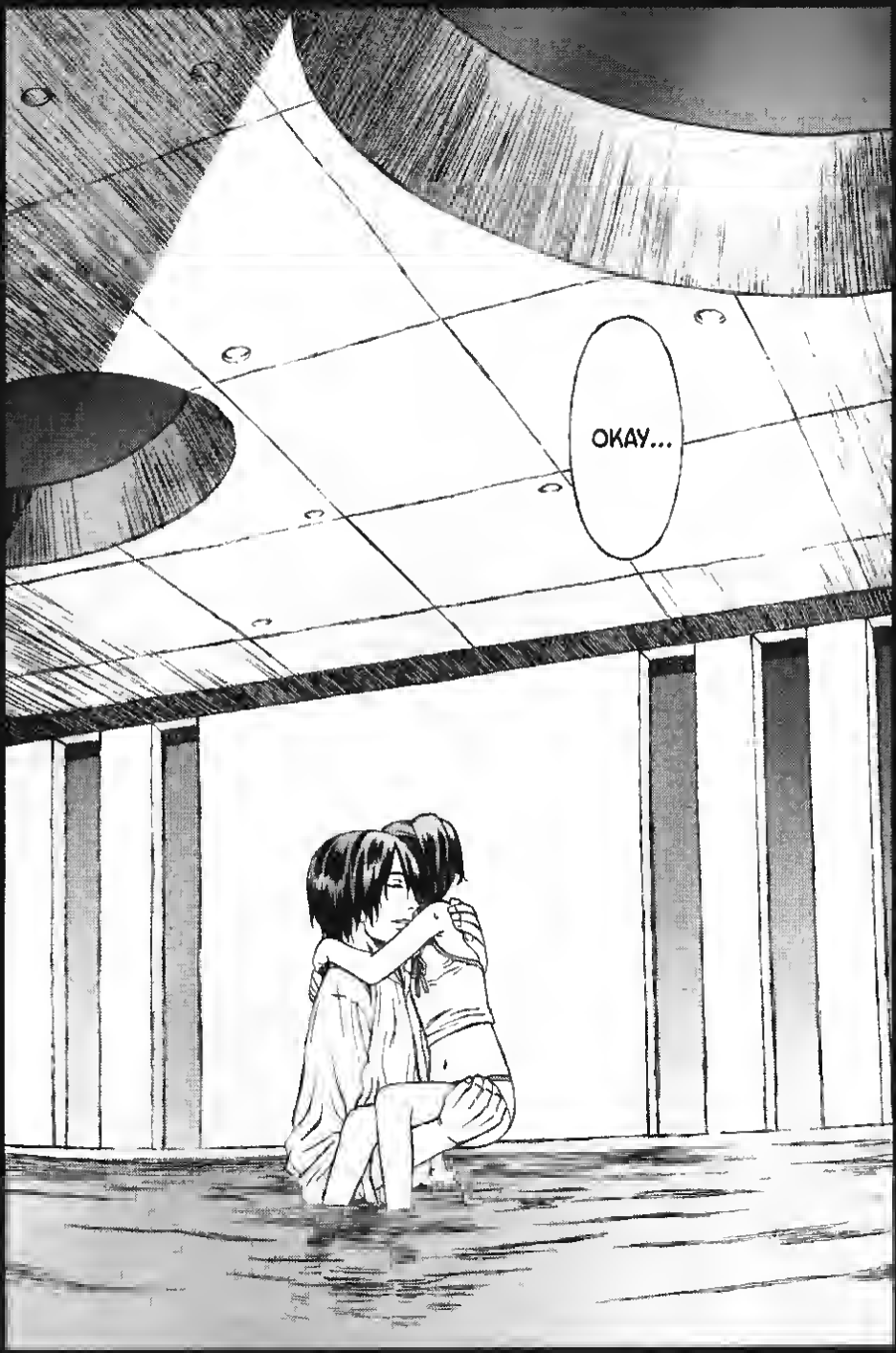
LOOK, THE MOON...
THE MOON?
OH, YOU'RE RIGHT.
AND YOU CAN SEE SO MANY STARS AS WELL!!

I FEEL AS THOUGH I CAN EVEN REACH THE STARS.
BECAUSE YOU'RE HOLDING ME, KUROE...

MISAKI...
YES?
HE HE HE... I THINK I WAS BEING A BIT SILLY JUST NOW.
JUST KIDDING ...

SOMEDAY...

LET'S GO TO THE BEACH TOGETHER.

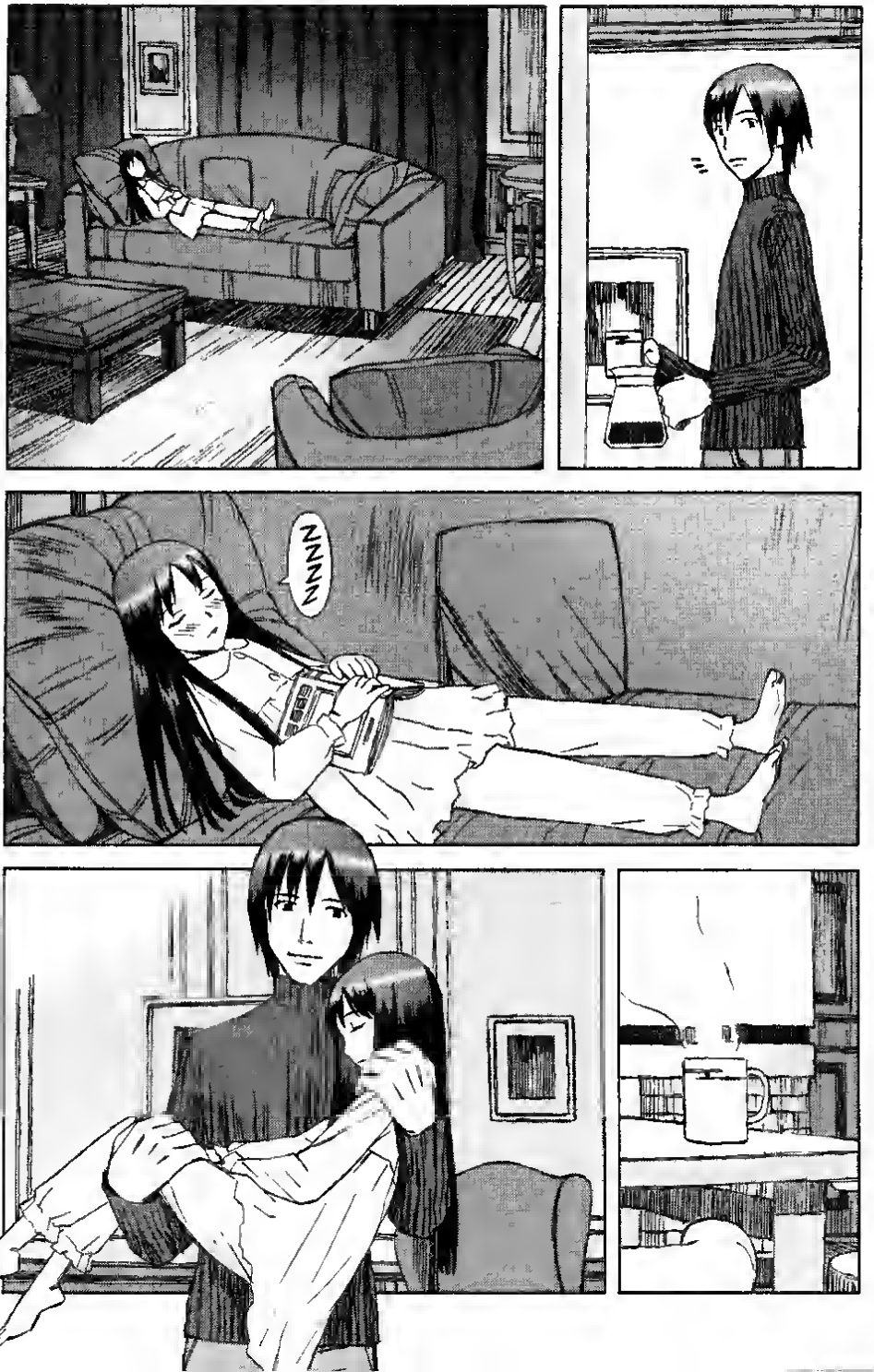

OKAY...

BUT BEFORE THAT...
YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO SWIM AT LEAST 25 METERS.
SPLASH
SPLASH
.....
OKAY. NEXT WE'LL WORK ON YOUR BREATHING.

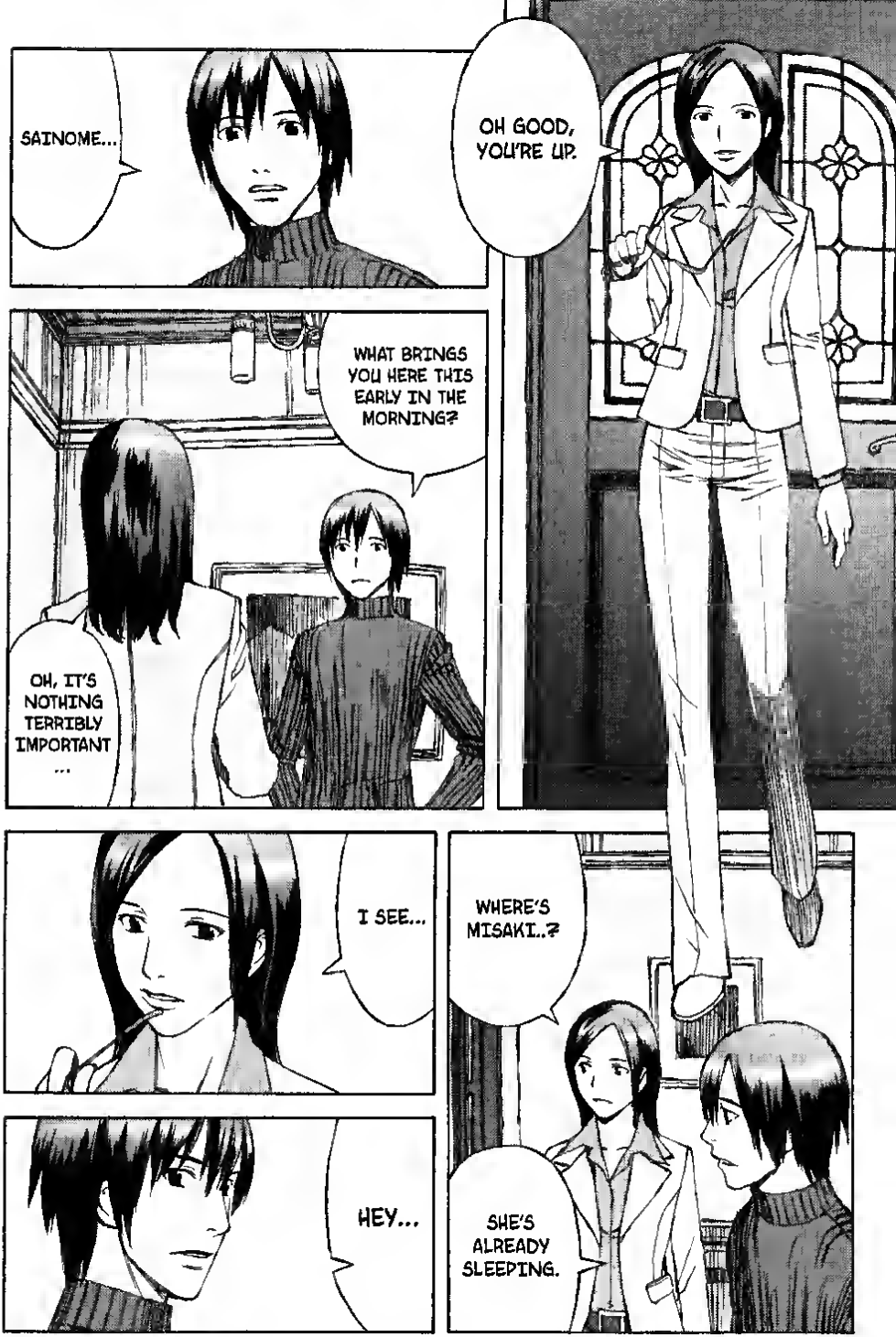
Episode 18

MIDNIGHT CRUISE

素顔の彼女 - Her True Face

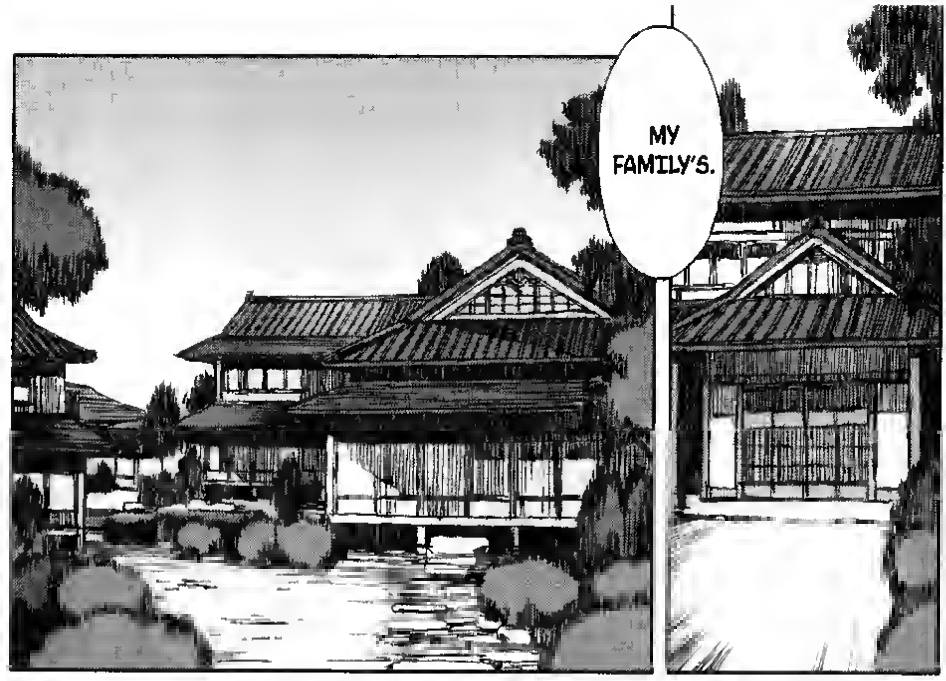

ZZZZ

PAT
I HAVE OTHER THINGS I NEED TO DO...
NOW THEN...
DING DONG
DING DONG
!!

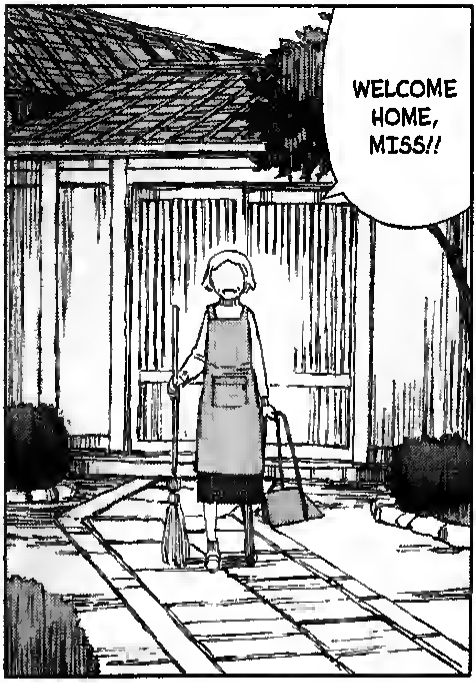

SAINOME...
OH GOOD, YOU'RE UP.
WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE THIS EARLY IN THE MORNING?
OH, IT'S NOTHING TERRIBLY IMPORTANT ...
I SEE...
WHERE'S MISAKI..?
HEY...
SHE'S ALREADY SLEEPING.

WANNA GO ON A DATE?
HUH?

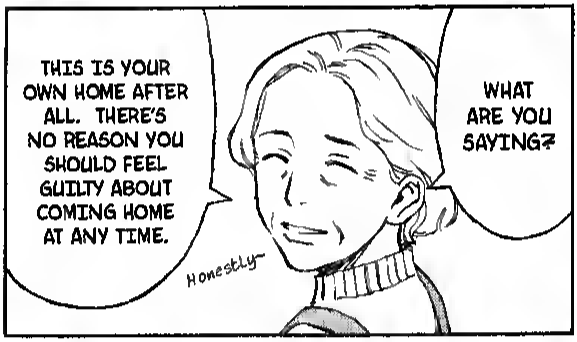
IF YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT FAST CARS, WHAT ABOUT THE ONE YOU HAVE?
AS USUAL, I SEE YOU'RE STILL DRIVING AROUND NICE CARS.
TO THE MAIN HOUSE.
SO, WHERE ARE WE GOING EXACTLY?
OH THAT? IT'S JUST A KEEPSAKE FROM MR. REIJI.
Note In Japan the main house is where either the eldest family members live, or where a residence which has been passed down between generations is
.....
WHOSE MAIN HOUSE?



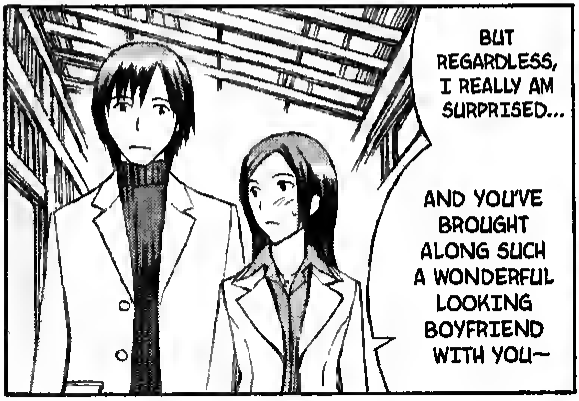
Note: "Senpai" is a word used to show respect to someone who is senior to the speaker at something (whether it be a skill, workplace, or grade at school).

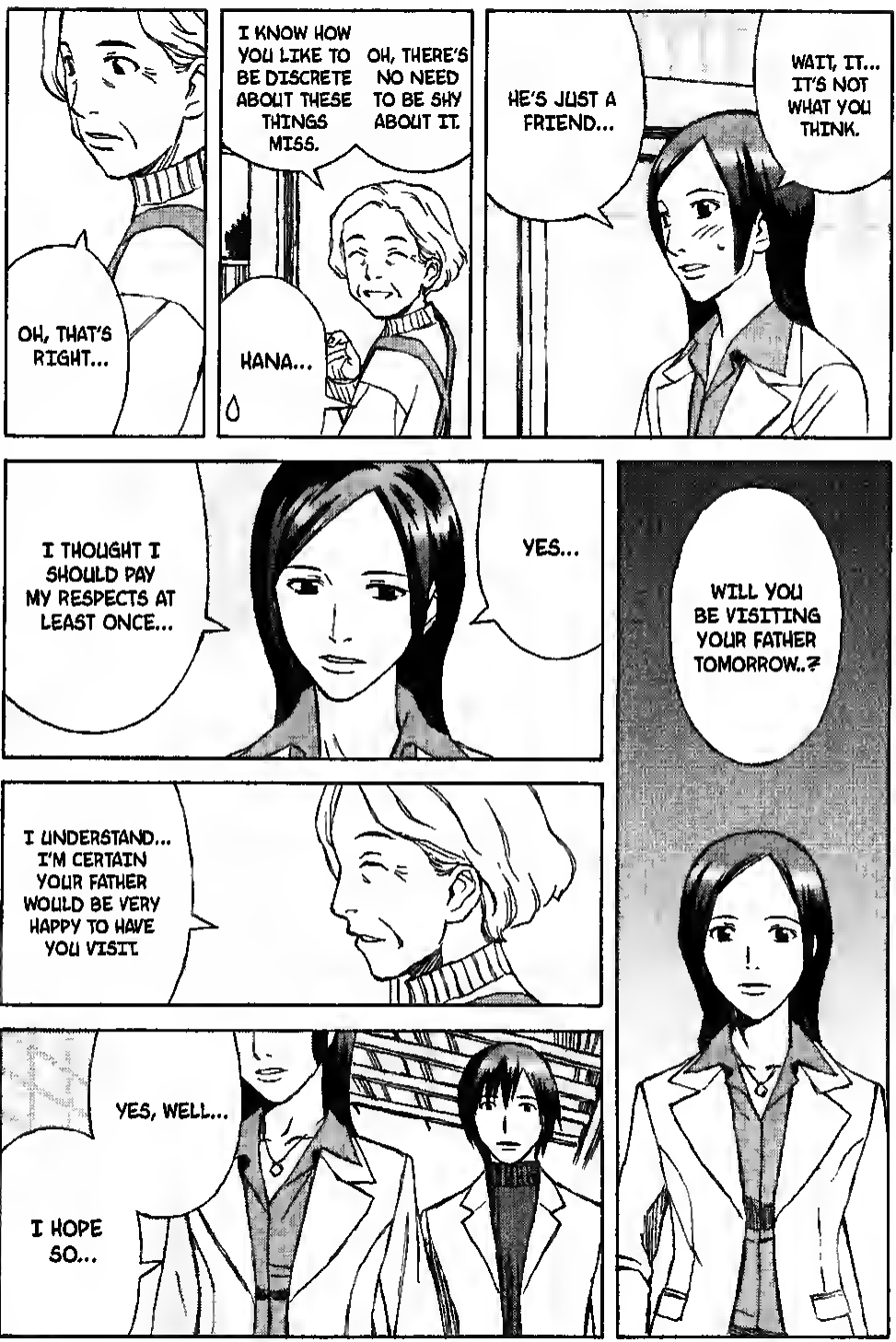

WELCOME HOME, MISS!!

MS SAYAKA!!


THIS IS YOUR OWN HOME AFTER ALL. THERE'S NO REASON YOU SHOULD FEEL GUILTY ABOUT COMING HOME AT ANY TIME.
Honestly~
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

FOR DROPPING IN WITHOUT WARNING LIKE THIS.
I'M SORRY, HANA...

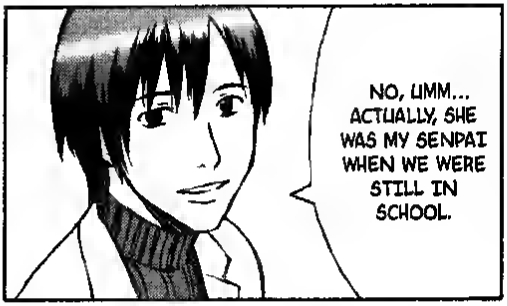

BUT REGARDLESS, I REALLY AM SURPRISED...
AND YOU'VE BROUGHT ALONG SUCH A WONDERFUL LOOKING BOYFRIEND WITH YOU~


OH, THAT'S RIGHT...
I KNOW HOW YOU LIKE TO BE DISCRETE ABOUT THESE THINGS MISS.
OH, THERE'S NO NEED TO BE SHY ABOUT IT.
HANA...
HE'S JUST A FRIEND...
WAIT, IT... IT'S NOT WHAT YOU THINK.
I THOUGHT I SHOULD PAY MY RESPECTS AT LEAST ONCE...
YES...
WILL YOU BE VISITING YOUR FATHER TOMORROW..?
I UNDERSTAND... I'M CERTAIN YOUR FATHER WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO HAVE YOU VISIT
YES, WELL...
I HOPE SO...

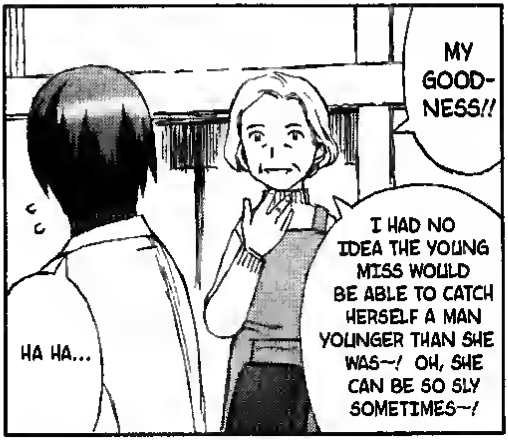
I SEE... THEN IT MUST MEAN TOMORROW IS THE ANNIVERSARY OF DR. SAINOME'S DEATH...

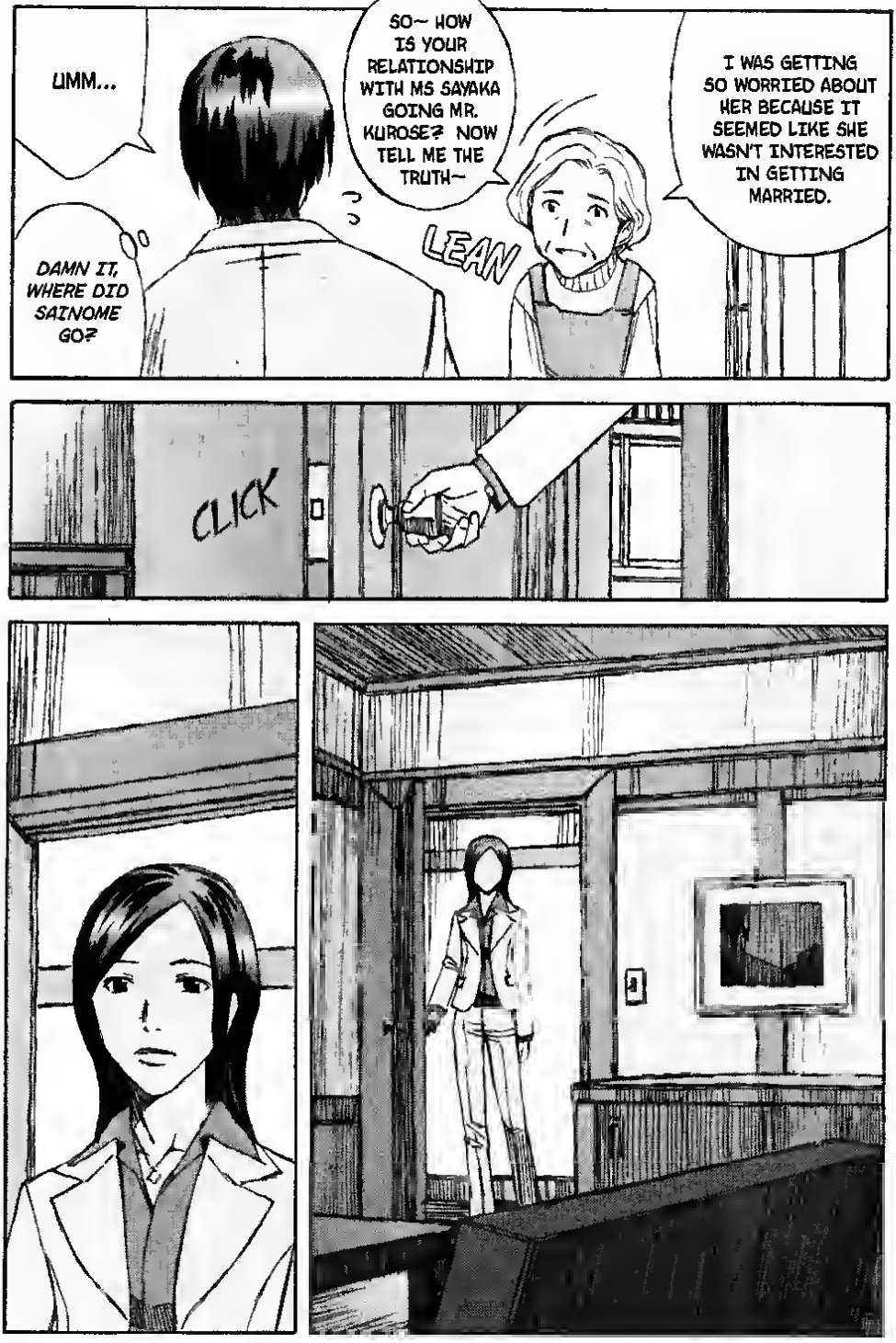
IF SHE'S HERE TO PAY HER RESPECTS...

OH MY, DID YOU KNOW MS SAYAKA'S FATHER MR. KUROSE?


NO, UMM... ACTUALLY, SHE WAS MY SENPAI WHEN WE WERE STILL IN SCHOOL.

YES, MY SISTER WAS A PATIENT AT DR. SAINOME'S HOSPITAL.
THEN THAT'S WHERE YOU MUST HAVE MET MS SAYAKA—

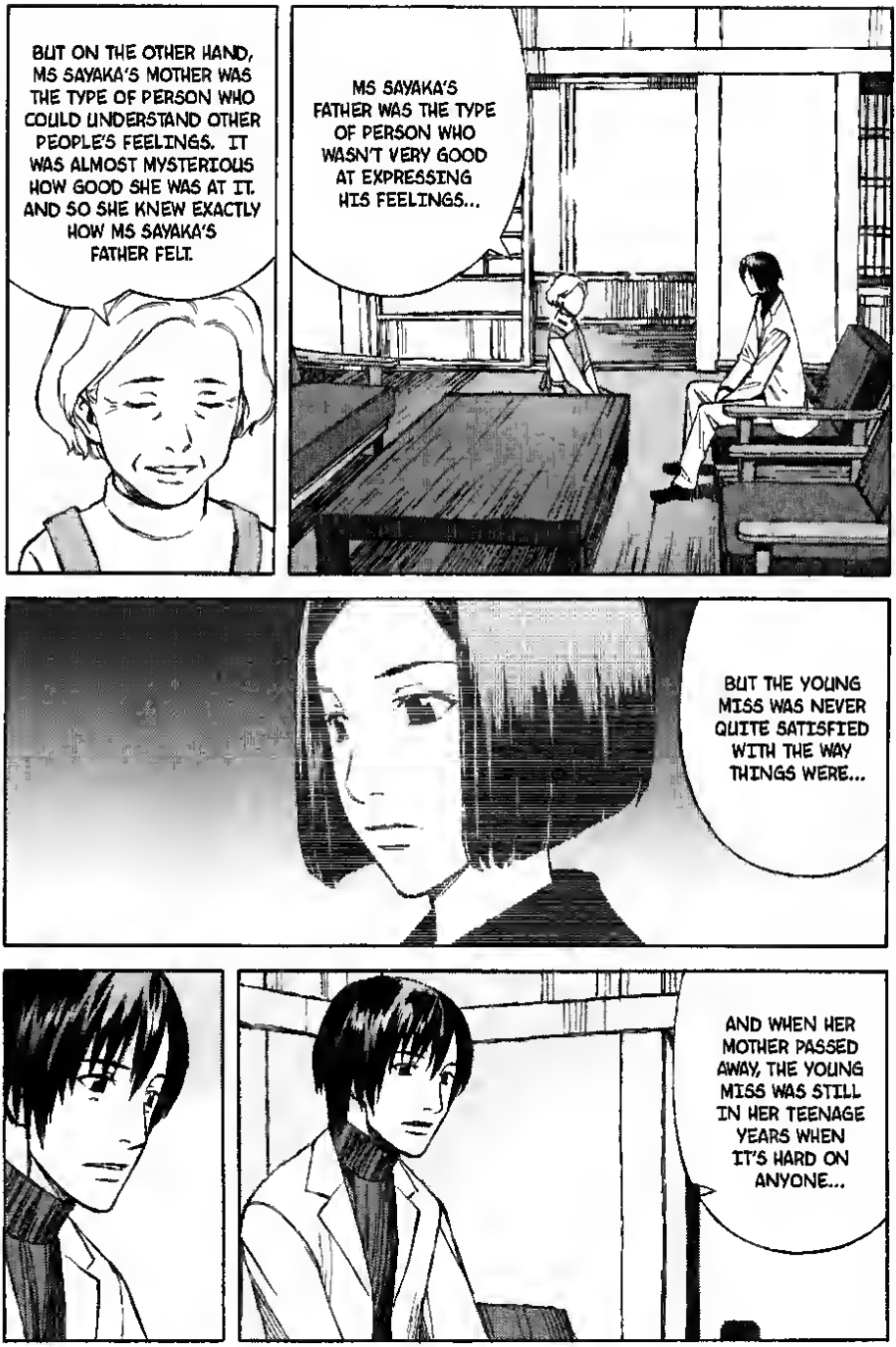

MY GOOD-NESS!!
I HAD NO IDEA THE YOUNG MISS WOULD BE ABLE TO CATCH HERSELF A MAN YOUNGER THAN SHE WAS—! OH, SHE CAN BE SO SLY SOMETIMES—!
HA HA...


UMM...
SO~ HOW IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MS SAYAKA GOING MR. KUROSE? NOW TELL ME THE TRUTH~
I WAS GETTING SO WORRIED ABOUT HER BECAUSE IT SEEMED LIKE SHE WASN'T INTERESTED IN GETTING MARRIED.
DAMN IT, WHERE DID SAINOME GO?
LEAN
CLICK

YES, I KNOW...
I... WENT TO SEE HER JUST NOW.
MOM... PASSED AWAY JUST A SHORT WHILE AGO.
WHY..?
.....
WHY DIDN'T YOU COME BEFORE SHE LEFT?

THAT PATIENT NEEDED ME... SO I HAD TO GO.
IT WAS UNFORTUNATE, BUT IT COULDN'T BE HELPED...
THERE WAS AN EMERGENCY SURGERY.
SLAP
IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN BEING THERE FOR MOM'S FINAL MOMENTS?!
ARE YOU SAYING SAVING THE LIFE OF SOMEONE YOU DON'T EVEN KNOW
IS THAT ALL YOU CAN SAY?
"IT COULDN'T BE HELPED"..?

YOU SHOULD NEVER SAY SOMETHING LIKE THAT.
SAYAKA ..!!


BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, MS SAYAKA'S MOTHER WAS THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO COULD UNDERSTAND OTHER PEOPLE'S FEELINGS. IT WAS ALMOST MYSTERIOUS HOW GOOD SHE WAS AT IT. AND SO SHE KNEW EXACTLY HOW MS SAYAKA'S FATHER FELT.
MS SAYAKA'S FATHER WAS THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO WASN'T VERY GOOD AT EXPRESSING HIS FEELINGS...
BUT THE YOUNG MISS WAS NEVER QUITE SATISFIED WITH THE WAY THINGS WERE...
AND WHEN HER MOTHER PASSED AWAY, THE YOUNG MISS WAS STILL IN HER TEENAGE YEARS WHEN IT'S HARD ON ANYONE...

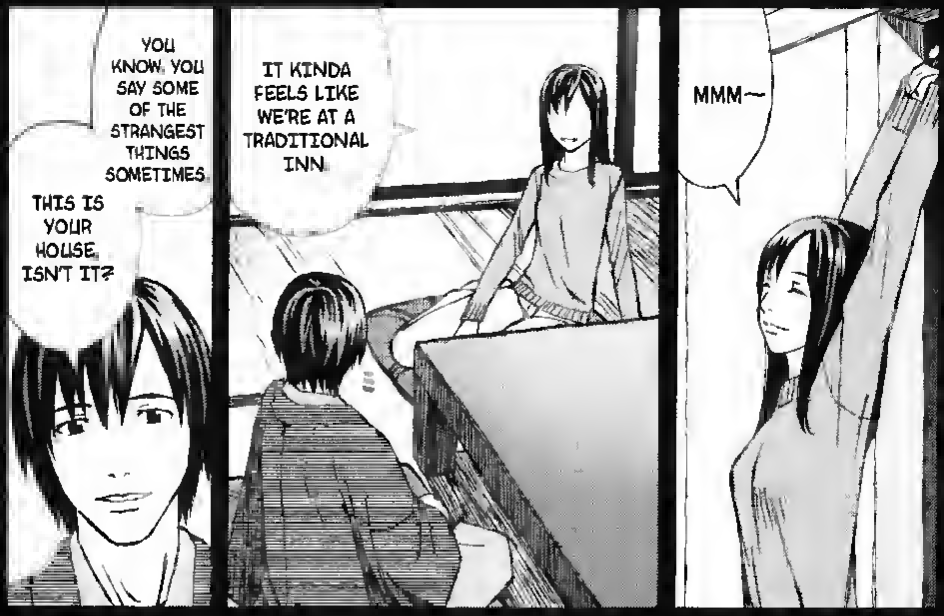
DIARY
A DIARY..?
.....!!
DIARY
I NEVER KNEW HE KEPT A DIARY...
.....
FLIP FLIP
FLIP

IT'S MORE LIKE A DAILY LOG RATHER THAN A JOURNAL...
FLIP FLIP
WHAT IS THIS..? IT'S NOTHING MORE THAN A JOURNAL OF WHO HE MET AND WHAT HE ATE...
HE DIDN'T WRITE ANYTHING PERSONAL ABOUT HIMSELF AT ALL...
.....
WELL... IT'S CERTAINLY LIKE HIM TO WRITE SOMETHING LIKE THIS...
HERE IT IS...
.....
FLIP FLIP

I HAD TO GO INTO AN EMERGENCY SURGERY STARTING IN THE MORNING...
THE PATIENT WAS JUST A YOUNG BOY.
THE JOURNAL ENTRY FROM THE DAY MOM PASSED AWAY...
AND SO, I WASN'T ABLE TO BE THERE FOR YOKO'S FINAL MOMENTS
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, I WAS ABLE TO SAVE THE LIFE OF A YOUNG BOY.
IT WASN'T UNTIL 6 HOURS LATER THAT I WAS ABLE TO LEAVE THE SURGERY ROOM.
THAT THE DECISION I MADE WAS THE RIGHT ONE...
I'M SURE YOKO WOULD UNDERSTAND.

SLAM

I LAID OUT TWO FUTONS SIDE BY SIDE IN THE GUEST ROOM IN THE BACK.
OH, THAT'S RIGHT.
MS SAYAKA, I'LL BE HEADING HOME NOW.
!!
THANK YOU FOR TAKING CARE OF EVERYTHING.
EH..?!
I DON'T KNOW WHETHER HE'S JUST PLAIN NAIVE OR IF HE DOESN'T EVEN SEE ME AS A WOMAN...
IT'S NOTHING ...
WHAT'S WRONG?
.....
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN KIND OF NICE IF YOU SHOWED AT LEAST A LITTLE BIT OF REACTION.. WE ARE STAYING THE NIGHT TOGETHER AFTER ALL...
GOOD NIGHT.
SLIDE


YOU KNOW, YOU SAY SOME OF THE STRANGEST THINGS SOMETIMES.
THIS IS YOUR HOUSE, ISN'T IT?
IT KINDA FEELS LIKE WE'RE AT A TRADITIONAL INN.
MMM~

OH THIS? MS HANA WENT THROUGH THE TROUBLE OF FINDING IT SOMEWHERE SO I THOUGHT I'D PLAY ALONG AND WEAR IT.
AND FOR SOME REASON, THERE'S EVEN A PERSON WEARING A YUKATA SITTING RIGHT NEXT TO ME.
THAT'S TRUE. BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN BACK IN A REALLY LONG TIME...

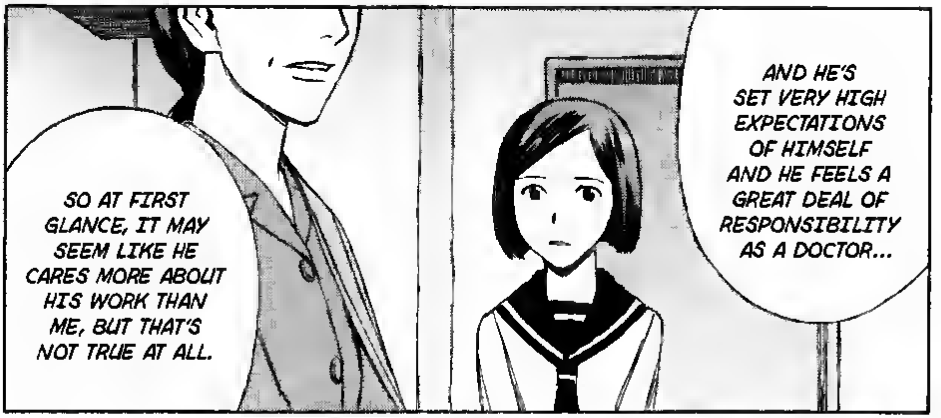
Note: A yukata is traditional clothing worn during the summer and is commonly worn at traditional inns.

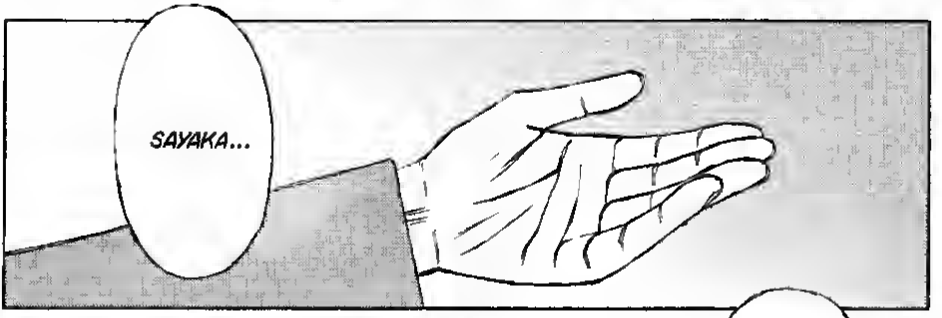
HANA HAD BROUGHT SOME OF THE LOCAL SAKE FOR US. IT'S REALLY GOOD.
SO HOW ABOUT A FEW DRINKS?
SLIDE
NO... IT'S NOTHING...
GIGGLE
CLANK
OH MY, I HAVE TO SAY I'M RATHER FLATTERED BY YOUR REACTION.
WHAT IS IT..?
.....

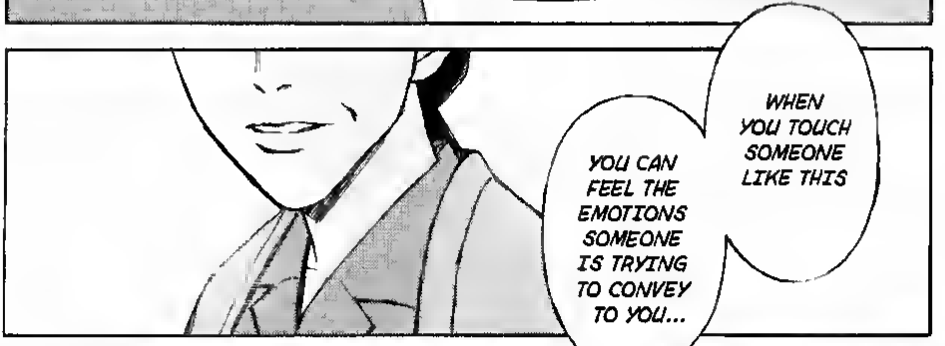
AND IT KINDA FEELS STRANGE HAVING YOU SIT HERE NEXT TO ME.
IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE I RELAXED LIKE THIS AND TIME SEEMED TO GO BY SO SLOWLY...
YOU DO SEEM LIKE THE WORKAHOLIC TYPE, SAINOME.
I THINK YOU'VE JUST BEEN KEEPING YOURSELF OVERLY BUSY WITH WORK ALL THE TIME.
BUT I'VE BECOME EXACTLY LIKE HIM...
I USED TO HATE THAT ABOUT HIM SO MUCH THAT I COULDN'T STAND IT...
HOW STRANGE ...

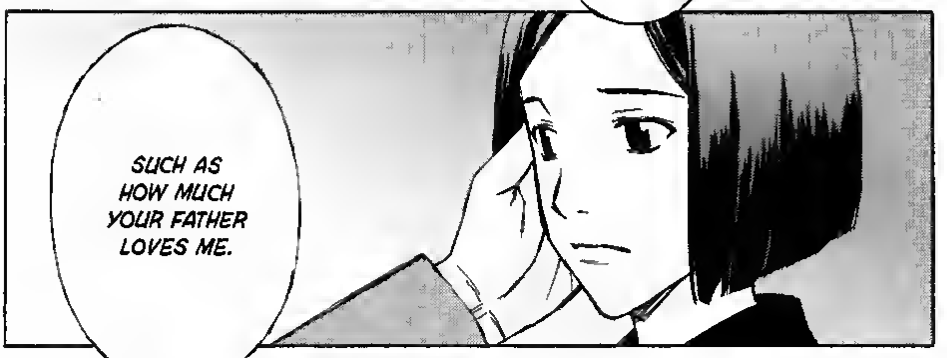
ALL HE EVER DID WAS WORK, AND HE WASN'T THE TYPE OF PERSON WHO PAID VERY MUCH ATTENTION TO HIS OWN FAMILY...
YES...
ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT DR. SAINOME..?
IT MIGHT HAVE SIMPLY BEEN THAT HE WAS NEVER QUITE INTERESTED ENOUGH TO PAY ANY ATTENTION TO ME...
AND THE ONLY TIME I CAN REMEMBER THAT HE EVER HIT ME WAS ONCE... ON THAT DAY...
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND, HE NEVER SCOLDED ME EITHER...
HE NEVER ONCE PRAISED ME...

AFTER ALL THIS TIME, I THOUGHT I COULD AT LEAST UNDERSTAND HIM A BIT MORE...
BUT IN THE END... I GUESS THAT WON'T EVER BE POSSIBLE...
SAYAKA... PLEASE DON'T THINK OF YOUR FATHER LIKE THAT.
HE'S NEVER BEEN VERY GOOD WITH WORDS OR CONVEYING HIS FEELINGS...


SO AT FIRST GLANCE, IT MAY SEEM LIKE HE CARES MORE ABOUT HIS WORK THAN ME, BUT THAT'S NOT TRUE AT ALL.
AND HE'S SET VERY HIGH EXPECTATIONS OF HIMSELF AND HE FEELS A GREAT DEAL OF RESPONSIBILITY AS A DOCTOR...

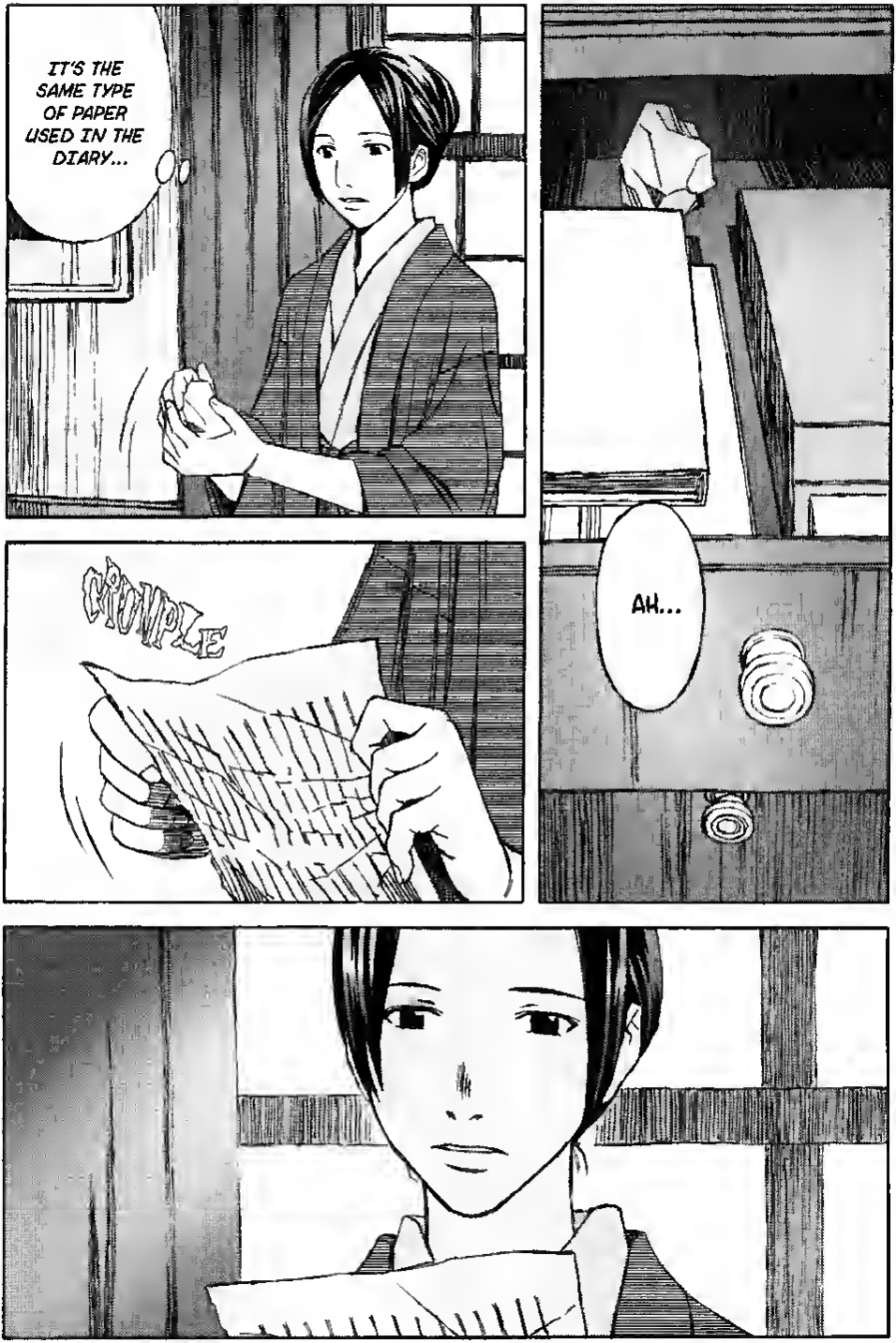

SAYAKA...


WHEN YOU TOUCH SOMEONE LIKE THIS
YOU CAN FEEL THE EMOTIONS SOMEONE IS TRYING TO CONVEY TO YOU...


SUCH AS HOW MUCH YOUR FATHER LOVES ME.

SO PLEASE SAYAKA...
DON'T THINK OF YOUR FATHER AS A BAD PERSON.
.....

!!
EVEN IF YOU SAY THAT...
THAT WASN'T HOW HE TRULY FELT...
BUT MOM...
DIARY
IT LOOKS AS THOUGH A PAGE WAS TORN OUT...
WAS THERE A PAGE HERE THAT'S MISSING..?
THESE MARKS...


IT'S THE SAME TYPE OF PAPER USED IN THE DIARY...
AH...
CRUMPLE

NO... I WOULD HAVE NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD LIE TO MYSELF REGARDING EVEN THIS MATTER.

AND I WOULD HAVE NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FORGIVE MYSELF HAD I JUST SAT THERE, POWERLESS TO HELP HER, JUST HOLDING HER HANDS.
I SIMPLY COULDN'T STAND THE FACT THAT I WOULD BE LOSING HER.
NOT BEING THERE FOR HER IN HER FINAL MOMENTS.
THE TRUTH IS, I REALLY DO REGRET IT...

I WAS... MY DECISION...
WAS WRONG...
BUT STILL... EVEN IF HOLDING HER HANDS WAS ALL I COULD DO FOR HER, I SHOULD HAVE BEEN THERE WITH HER TILL THE END...

WHY MY FATHER HAD RIPPED OUT THIS PAGE BUT DIDN'T THROW AWAY...
I HONESTLY DON'T KNOW.
BUT THAT PIECE OF PAPER WHERE HE HAD WRITTEN DOWN HIS TRUE FEELINGS ABOUT MOM...
WHY HE HAD RIPPED IT OUT BUT COULDN'T SIMPLY THROW IT AWAY...
I THINK NOW I CAN FINALLY UNDERSTAND AT LEAST A LITTLE, AS A DOCTOR, THE CONFLICT HE FELT...
DRIP
DRIP
BUT STILL...

EVEN IF I
UNDERSTAND
THAT NOW...

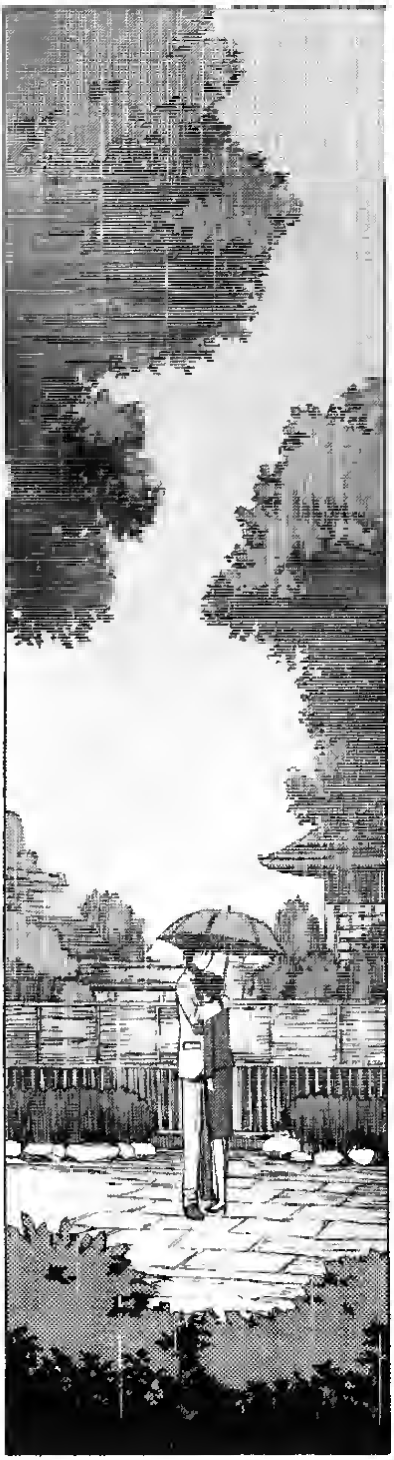
MS SAYAKA..! YOUR FATHER, HE DOESN'T HAVE MUCH TIME..!!
IT'S TOO LATE...
I HAVE A LOT OF WORK TO DO...
BUT I CAN'T COME.
I'M SORRY...
.....
PLEASE RETURN HOME AS SOON AS YOU CAN..!!
CLICK
MS SAYAKA..!

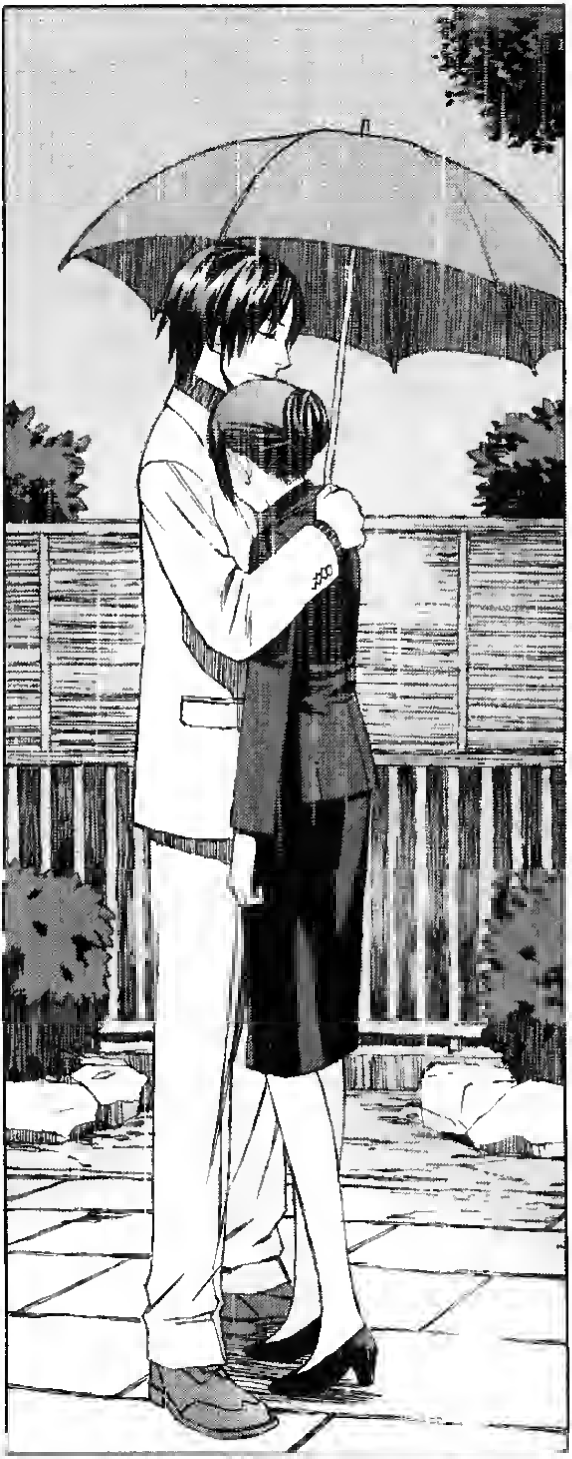
UM... EXCUSE ME...
YES... I AM...
ARE YOU BY ANY CHANCE A RELATIVE OF DR. SAINOME?

WHEN I WAS A YOUNG BOY, DR. SAINOME SAVED MY LIFE.
I CAME HERE TODAY TO LET HIM KNOW THAT I FINALLY GOT MY RESIDENCY AT A HOSPITAL.
AND EVEN THOUGH MY CAREER AS A DOCTOR IS ONLY JUST BEGINNING...
I HOPE TO SOMEDAY...

BECOME A GREAT DOCTOR LIKE HE WAS...
KUROE...
I...
I...

I WAS THE ONLY ONE...
THE ONLY PERSON WHO DIDN'T UNDERSTAND...
AND BECAUSE I WAS BEING SO STUBBORN AND CHILDISH... I... I...





IN THE END... I WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO DIDN'T TRULY UNDERSTAND MY MOTHER AND FATHER'S FEELINGS....

BUT YOU UNDERSTAND THEIR FEELINGS NOW, RIGHT?
IT JUST TOOK YOU A LITTLE LONGER, THAT'S ALL.
I'M SORRY... I SHOULDN'T HAVE DRAGGED YOU ALONG FOR THIS...
I... I NORMALLY DON'T SHOW TOO MANY PEOPLE THIS SIDE OF ME...
YES, YOU'RE RIGHT...
.....

YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T SHOW TOO MANY PEOPLE A FACE LIKE THAT.
Especially with the way your eyes look right now
YOU DORK...
TURN

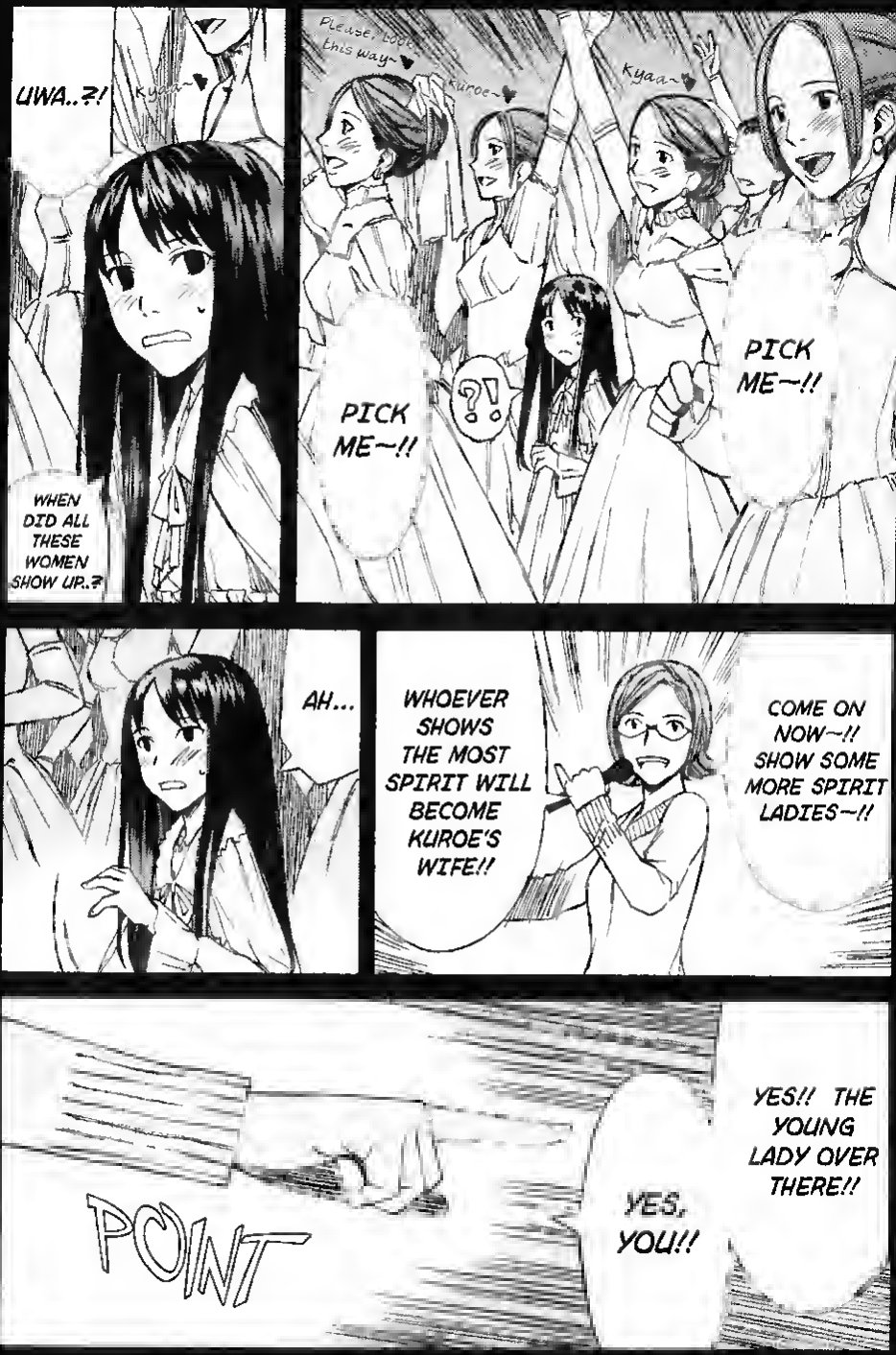
KUROE...
HM?
THANK YOU.

FLASH
HELLO AND WELCOME EVERYONE!!
TODAY, WE'LL BE DECIDING...
WHO WILL BECOME KUROE'S FUTURE WIFE~!!
HELLO LADIES~
EH..?
SO WITHOUT ANY FURTHER ADO~!! IF YOU WANT TO BECOME KUROE'S WIFE...
PLEASE RAISE YOUR HAND!!

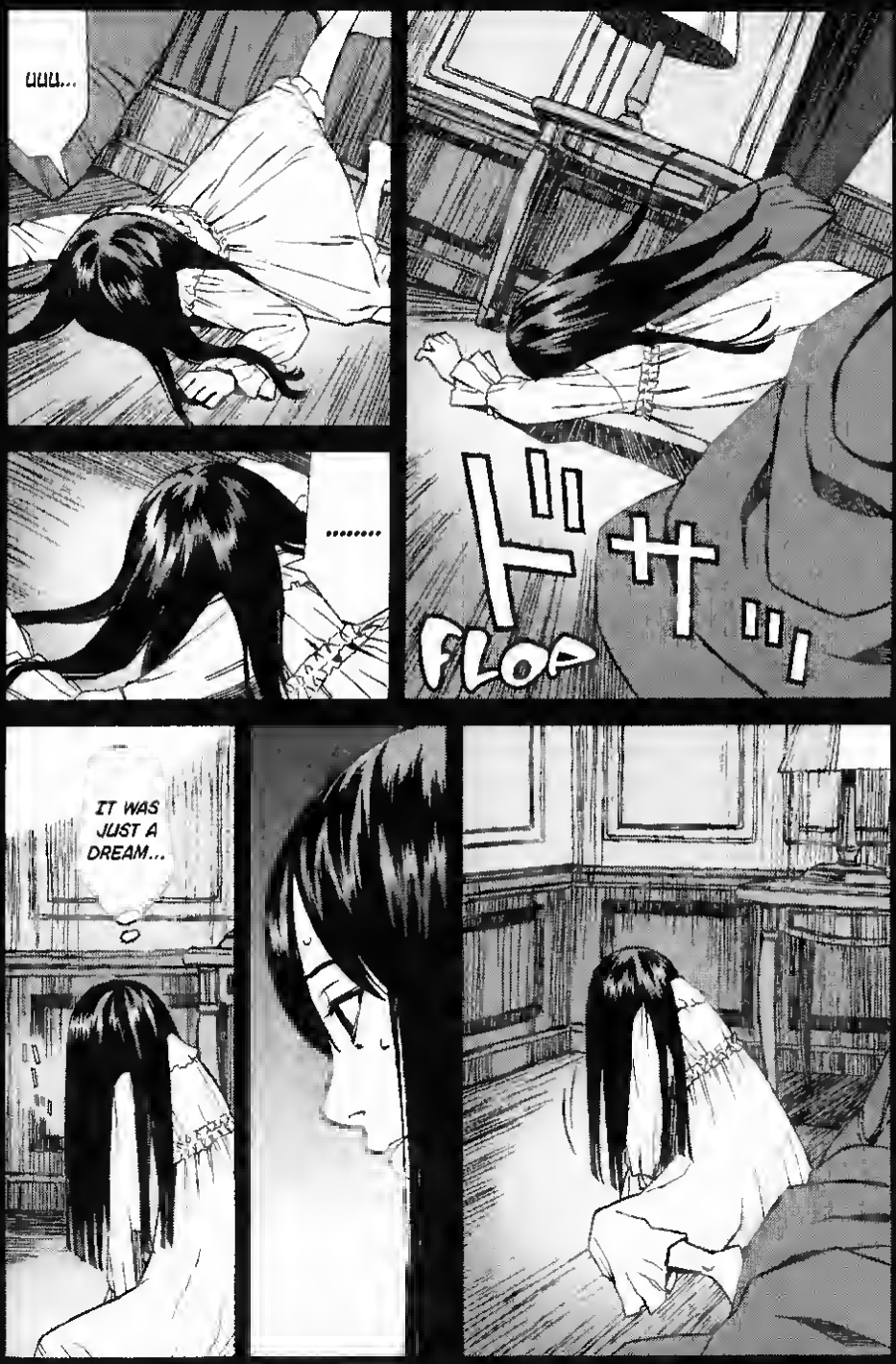
Episode 19

HOME ALONE

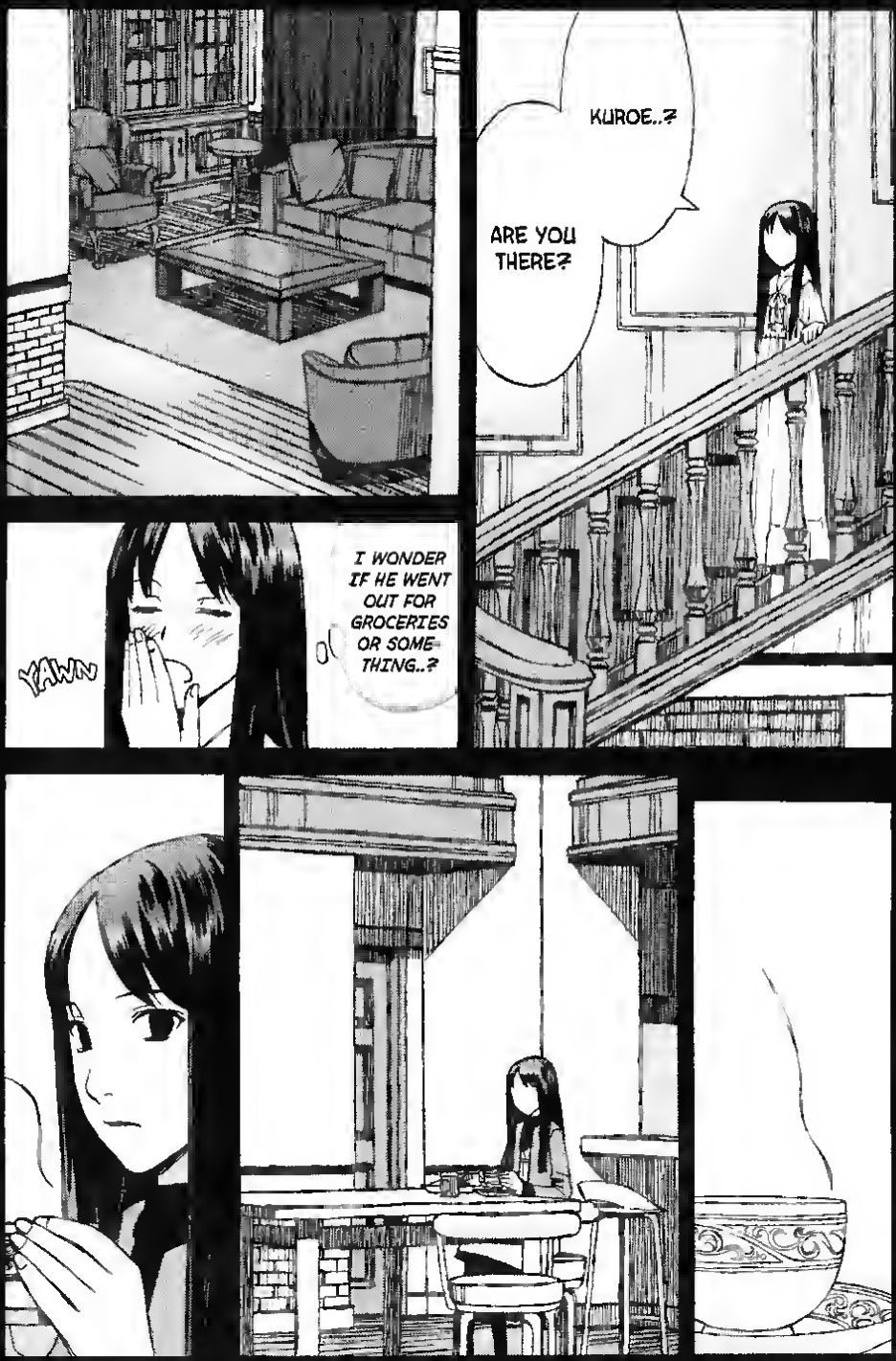
あなたのいない部屋 – The Room Without You There

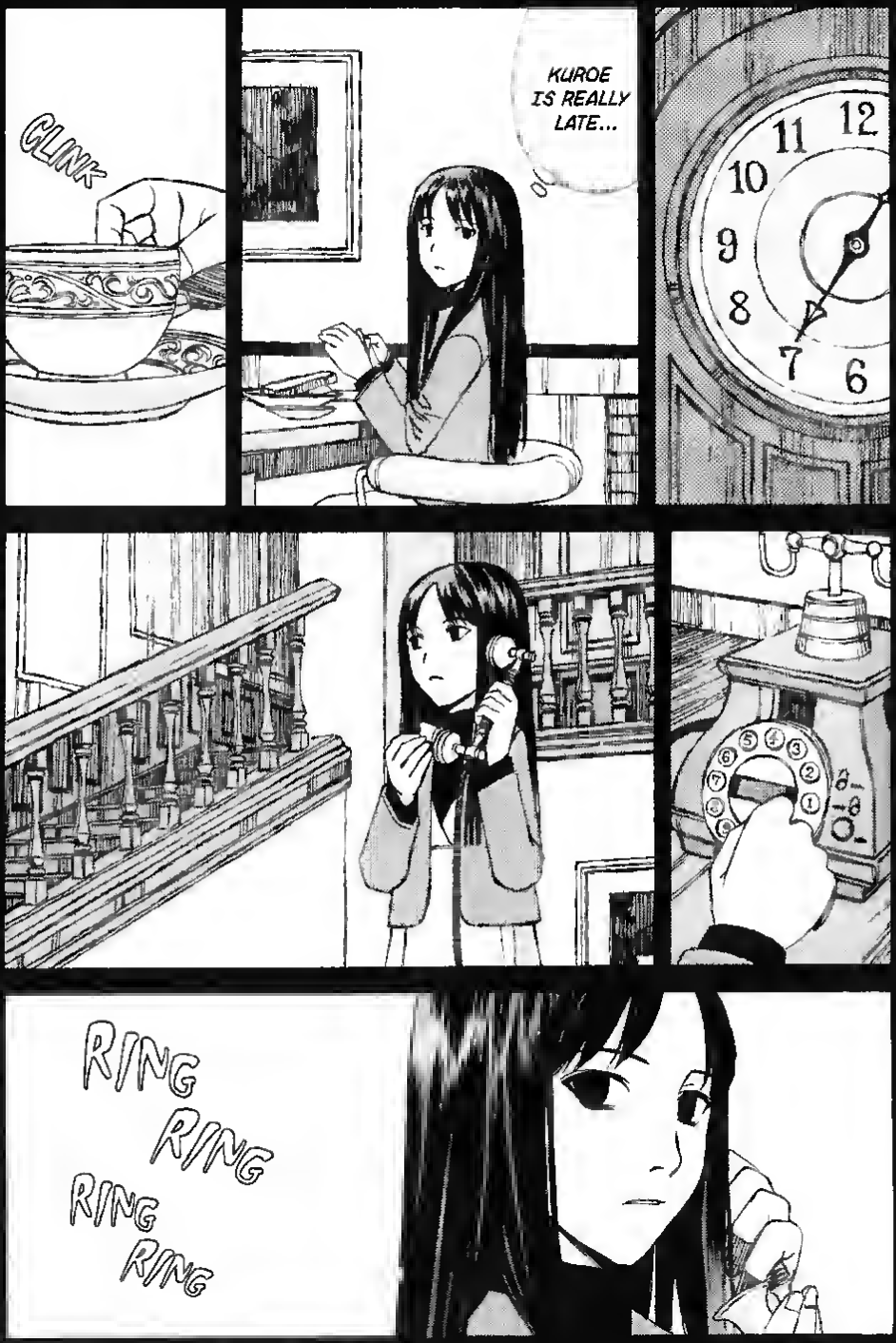

UWA..?!
Kyaa~
WHEN DID ALL THESE WOMEN SHOW UP..?
Please, look this way~
Kuroe~
Kyaa~
PICK ME~!!
?!
PICK ME~!!
AH...
WHOEVER SHOWS THE MOST SPIRIT WILL BECOME KUROE'S WIFE!!
COME ON NOW~!! SHOW SOME MORE SPIRIT LADIES~!!
POINT
YES, YOU!!
YES!! THE YOUNG LADY OVER THERE!!

IT'S BEEN DECIDED! THE LUCKY LADY WHO WILL BECOME KUROE'S FUTURE WIFE IS MS SAINDME!!
EH..?!
PLEASE GIVE THE NEW COUPLE A ROUND OF APPLAUSE!!
KYAA~♡
SA... SAINOME ?!
IT CAN'T BE TRUE, RIGHT KUROE..?!
NO, WAIT..!
PLEASE DON'T LEAVE ME!!
BUUU~
I'M SORRY, MISAKI.
THE TRUTH IS I'VE LOVED KUROE IN SECRET FOR A LONG TIME NOW.
WELL THEN, SO LONG MISAKI. STAY WELL~
PLEASE WAIT~!!
WAIT..!


uuu...
.....
ドサッ
FLOP
IT WAS JUST A DREAM...

000


KUROE..?
ARE YOU THERE?
I WONDER IF HE WENT OUT FOR GROCERIES OR SOMETHING..?
YAWN


CLINK
KUROE IS REALLY LATE...
12
11
10
9
8
7
6
RING RING
RING RING

BUT IF HE LEFT WITHOUT HIS CELL PHONE, IT PROBABLY MEANS HE WON'T BE OUT FOR VERY LONG...
WHAT'S THE POINT OF HAVING A CELL PHONE IF HE DOESN'T CARRY IT AROUND WITH HIM..?
HONESTLY ...
.....

STOP BEING SO PESKY YOU LITTLE BRAT!!
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO TELL YOU TO GET LOST?!
THIS ISN'T THE KIND OF PLACE FOR A LITTLE BRAT LIKE YOU TO BE COMING TO!!
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR IT!!
JUST GET SLY OUT HERE!!
IF YOU DON'T STOP IT RIGHT NOW
YOU'RE ASKING FOR IT!!
GOTO
GO AHEAD AND TRY IF YOU WANT!! I'M NOT BUDGING UNTIL I GET TO SEE TO SLY!!
...!! MONSIEUR ..!!
I'M SORRY ABOUT ALL THE NOISE SIR...
IT'S ALL RIGHT, GOTO
THE MADEMOISELLE IS A GUEST OF MINE
WHAT..? A LITTLE BRAT... I MEAN YOUNG LADY LIKE THIS~?!

OH, NOTHING. I WAS JUST CURIOUS...
WELL, A MINUTE AGO WAS THE KIND OF SITUATION WHERE YOU'D USE IT...
BY THE WAY, MADEMOISELLE... HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF SOMETHING CALLED FARUMEK?
OF COURSE I KNOW WHAT IT IS!! WHAT ABOUT IT?!
I SEE THAT MONSIEUR KUROE ISN'T WITH YOU TODAY.
PERHAPS HE'S ESCORTING SOME MADAME TO HER PLACE AT THE MOMENT~?
OH MY. NOW THAT ISN'T GOOD.
HE'S... GONE...

AHEM...
WHY DON'T YOU TELL ME EVERYTHING MADEMOI-SELLE?
IT ISN'T MUCH, BUT IT'S ALL OF MY ALLOWANCE MONEY...
IF... IF IT'S MONEY YOU WANT, I BROUGHT IT WITH ME...
WOW, BIG DEAL.
I SEE... SO IT'S BEEN HALF A DAY NOW SINCE HE'S BEEN MISSING...
SO I AM TO ASSUME YOU WOULD LIKE MY HELP IN FINDING MONSIEUR KUROE?

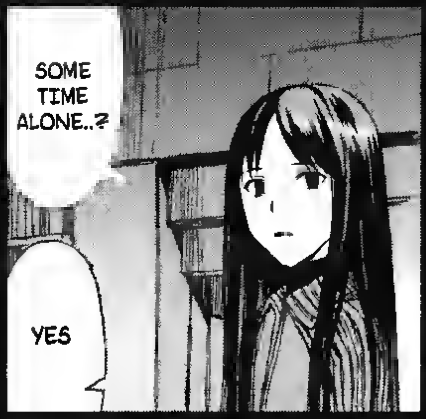
REGARDLESS OF WHO I AM, I'M NOT SO PATHETIC OF A MAN THAT I WOULD TAKE MONEY FROM A MADEMOISELLE IN TEARS.
EH..?
I'M SORRY, BUT I CAN'T ACCEPT THAT...
B... BUT WHY NOT?! IF IT ISN'T ENOUGH, I PROMISE I'LL...
NO, NO, NO, MADEMOISELLE.
IT SEEMS I'VE LET YOU IN ON SOME DANGEROUS INFORMATION.
FROM NOW ON, I THINK I'LL MAKE A NOTE TO BRING EYE DROPS WITH ME WHEN I COME TO YOU FOR HELP...
IS SOMETHING THE MATTER MADEMOISELLE?
HMP...
NOW THEN... SHALL WE BEGIN OUR SEARCH?

...IS WHAT YOU SAID
HE'S SOMEONE THAT KNOWS A LOT ABOUT WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND TOWN.
RALLY?
FIRST, WHY DON'T WE GO SEE RALLY?
HERE HE IS. MEET RALLY.
BUT HE'S JUST A CAT!!
TAP
Hmm~
WAIT... I'M ALMOST CERTAIN I'VE SEEN YOU SOMEWHERE BEFORE...
HM..?!

YOU'RE THE BASTARD FROM THE SUBWAY—!!
HMP
JUMP
AAAAHHH!!
NUDGE
NUDGE
.....
MORE IMPORTANTLY WHAT GOOD WILL IT DO FOR US TO COME SEE A CAT?
I WOULDN'T SAY THAT EXACTLY...
OH..? WERE YOU ALREADY ACQUAINTANCES MADEMOISELLE?
JUST TRUST ME. I'M COUNTING ON YOU RALLY.
SO IF ANY OF THEM SAW MONSIEUR KUROE, HE'LL LET ME KNOW.
HE'S SOMEWHAT LIKE THE BOSS OF ALL THE STRAY CATS AROUND HERE.
HE'S NO ORDINARY CAT, MADEMOISELLE.
IF THIS IS SOME KIND OF JOKE I'M GOING TO HURT YOU...

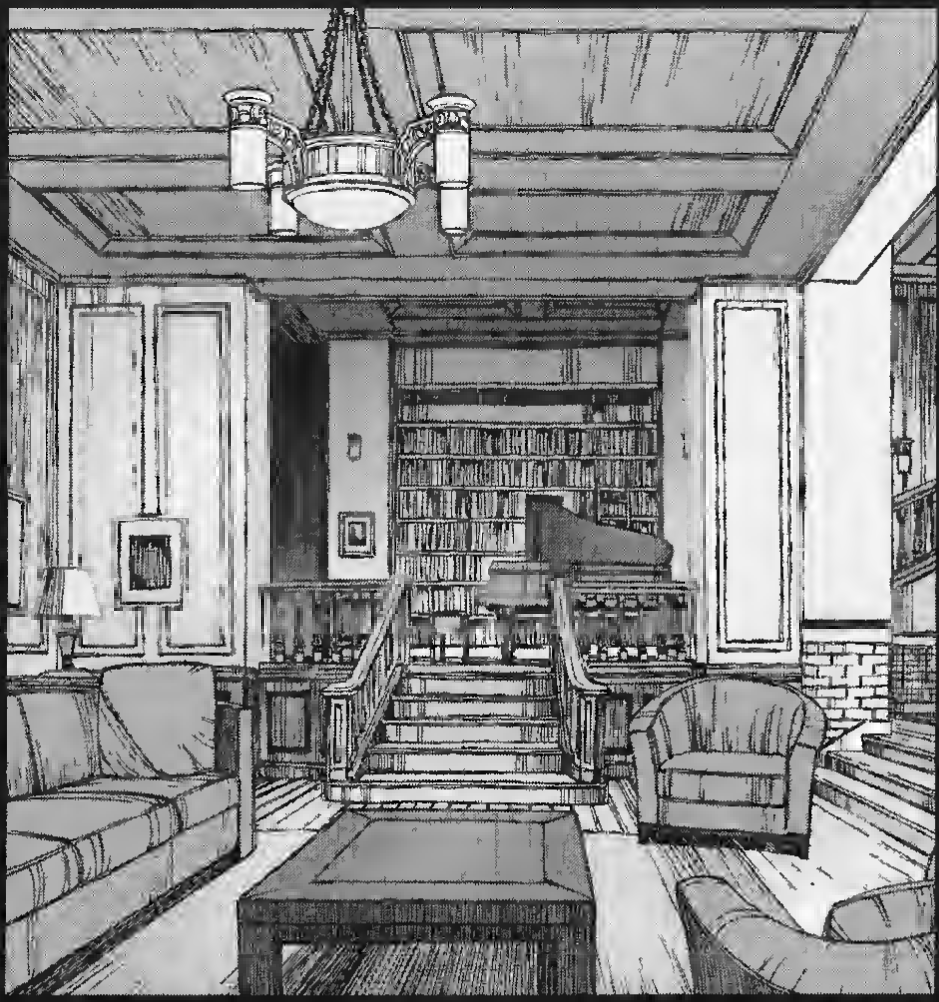
MADEMOI-
SELLE
BUT...
I THINK WE SHOULD CALL IT QUITS FOR TONIGHT
THE SUN WILL BE RISING SOON.
YOU AND I HAVE ALREADY CHECKED ALL THE LIKELY PLACES THE MONSIEUR MIGHT HAVE BEEN, MADEMOISELLE.
AND RALLY'S CONTACTS HAVEN'T SEEN HIM EITHER.

THERE'S REALLY NO NEED TO BE PUSHING YOURSELF ANY FURTHER.
I CAN TAKE IT FROM HERE ALONE. SO YOU SHOULD RETURN HOME AND REST YOURSELF MADEMOISELLE.
OK...
THANK YOU...
OK...
IT'S JUST...
THE MONSIEUR WOULD NEVER LEAVE YOU BEHIND TO GO OFF SOMEWHERE, MADEMOISELLE.
WELL... YOU SHOULDN'T BE SO WORRIED.

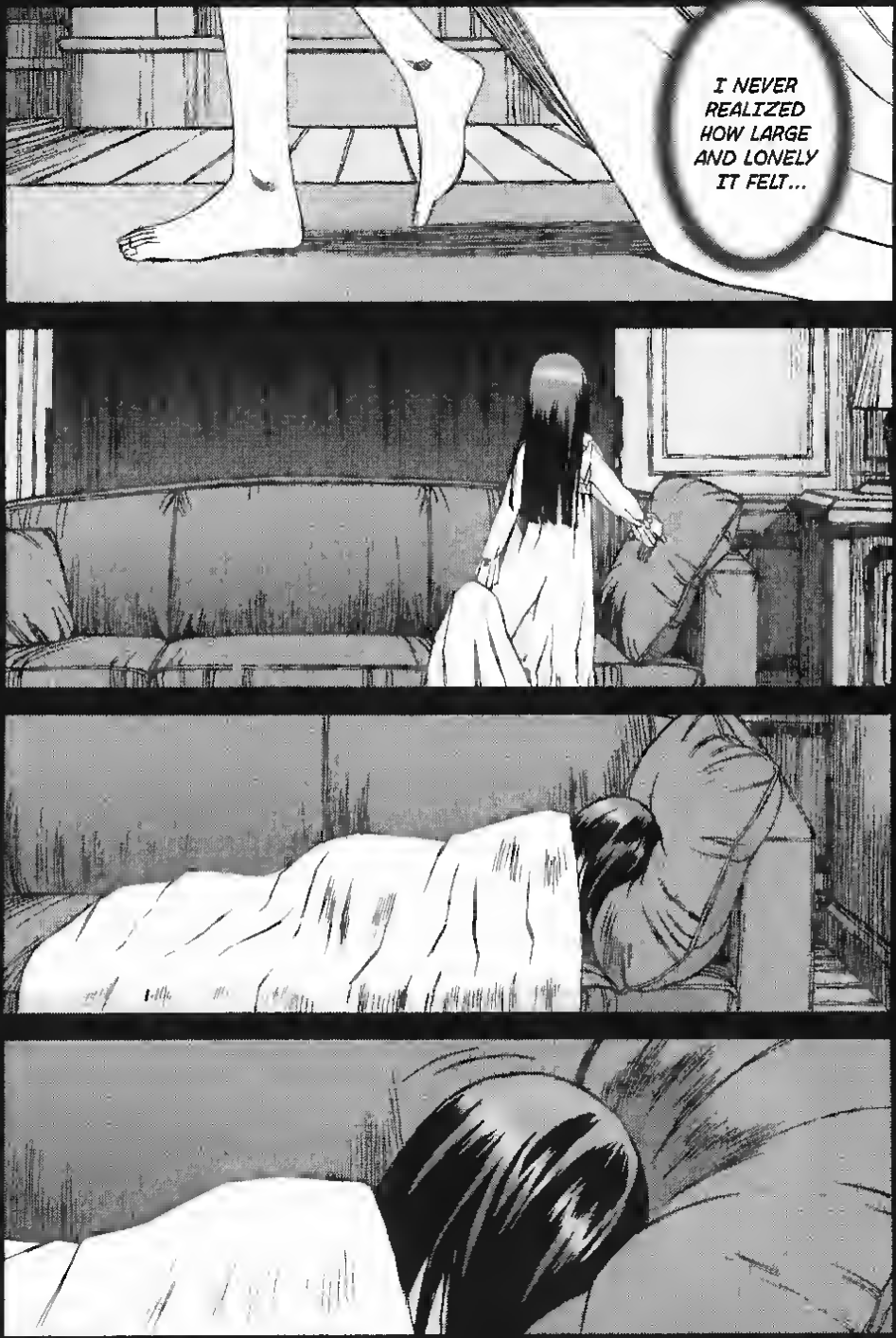

SOME TIME ALONE..?
YES

I'M SURE EVEN MONSIEUR KUROE NEEDS SOME TIME ALONE EVERY NOW AND THEN.

COME NOW, I'LL WALK YOU HOME.



THE ROOM WITHOUT KUROE HERE...

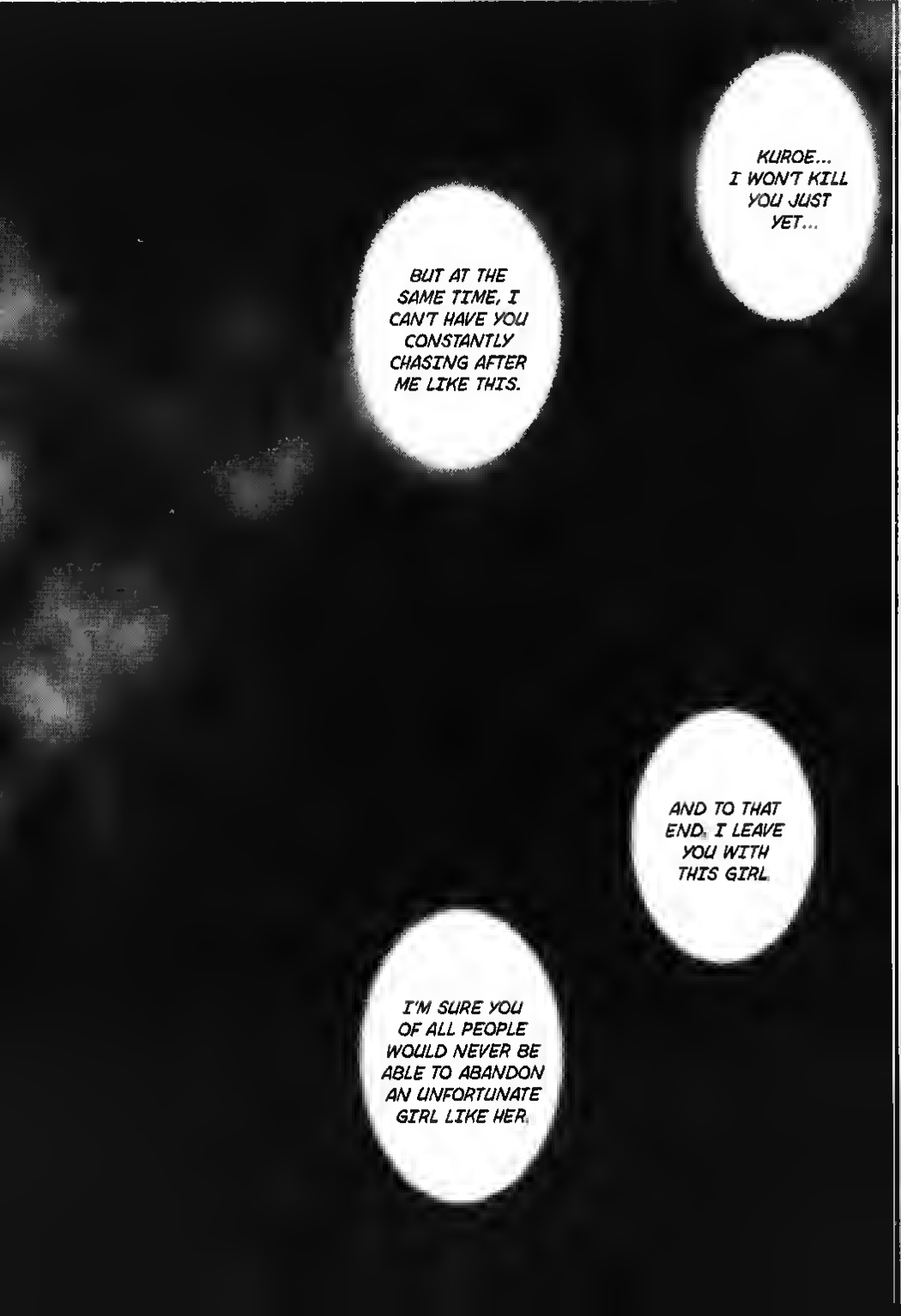

I NEVER REALIZED HOW LARGE AND LONELY IT FELT...

WHERE DID YOU GO?
KUROE...

NO. I'LL TAKE YOU ALL THE WAY HOME.
THANKS. THIS IS FAR ENOUGH.
WHAT?
YOU THINK YOU HAVE TIME TO BE WORRYING ABOUT ME?
YOU HAVEN'T CONTACTED MISAKI. HAVE YOU?
!!
AAH!

SORRY... I'LL MAKE IT UP TO YOU SOME OTHER TIME!!
SLAM
.....
VROOM
HONESTLY...
I CAN'T HELP BUT FEEL A BIT JEALOUS
seriously
CLICK

!!
I WONDER WHY SHE'S OUT HERE SLEEPING ON THE COUCH..?
ZZZZ


KUROE...
I WON'T KILL YOU JUST YET...
BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I CAN'T HAVE YOU CONSTANTLY CHASING AFTER ME LIKE THIS.
AND TO THAT END, I LEAVE YOU WITH THIS GIRL.
I'M SURE YOU OF ALL PEOPLE WOULD NEVER BE ABLE TO ABANDON AN UNFORTUNATE GIRL LIKE HER.

NO, SHE WILL BE THE SHACKLES THAT WILL SLOW YOU DOWN AND OUT OF MY WAY.
THIS WILL BE...

I'M SORRY, MISAKI...
I'M AFRAID
WE CAN'T BE TOGETHER ANYMORE...
KUROE ..?
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING..?!

AND SO...
GOODBYE, MISAKI...
KUROE ..!!
I HAVE TO LEAVE NOW TO CONTINUE SEARCHING FOR HER...
THERE'S SOMEONE VERY IMPORTANT TO ME THAT I CAN NEVER FORGET...
.....!!

KUROE～!!
MISAKI...

I'M HOME.

I WAS AT SAINOME'S MAIN HOUSE.
SO IN THE END, WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN SINCE YESTERDAY KUROE?
SAI-NOME'S MAIN HOUSE ?!
STARTLE
UWA?!
COME NOW— WHY DON'T WE GO IMMEDIATELY TO PAY MY RESPECTS TO MY NEW FATHER-IN-LAW?
HONESTLY... AND I JUST HAD THAT WEIRD DREAM TOO...
YES DEAR ♥
WHAT'S WRONG? WHY DID YOU YELL OUT LIKE THAT SO SUDDENLY?
IT... IT'S NOTHING ...

I'M SORRY FOR HAVING MADE YOU WORRY MISAKI... I SHOULD HAVE CALLED YOU TO LET YOU KNOW WHERE I WAS.
I'M REALLY SORRY.
SAINOME'S FATHER'S GRAVE..?
WE WENT TO VISIT SAINOME'S FATHER'S GRAVE... I OWE HIM A GREAT DEAL OF GRATITUDE FOR WHAT HE DID FOR ME IN THE PAST...
.....
IT'S OKAY. I DON'T REALLY MIND...
STAND
UM... CAN I ASK YOU SOMETHING?

KUROE, I GUESS...
EVEN YOU LIKE TO BE...
ALONE SOMETIMES, RIGHT?
DO I LIKE TO BE ALONE..?
RUSTLE
WELL, NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT... I'VE SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME ALONE UP UNTIL NOW... PROBABLY MORE THAN ENOUGH.

SO FROM NOW ON, I THINK IT'D BE NICE TO SPEND THE REST OF MY TIME TOGETHER WITH SOMEONE.

Episode 16

AFTER THE DANCE

その後のサイノメ

Sainome Later that Night

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE WENT RUSHING OFF LIKE THAT AFTER I SAID JUST THAT ONE THING...
SIGH~
IT WOULD'VE BEEN NICE IF HE HAD AT LEAST HESITATED A LITTLE...
IF I HADN'T SAID THAT, I WONDER IF SOMETHING MORE WOULD HAVE HAPPENED BETWEEN US...
BEER

To Be Continued In Blood Alone Volume 4!!

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